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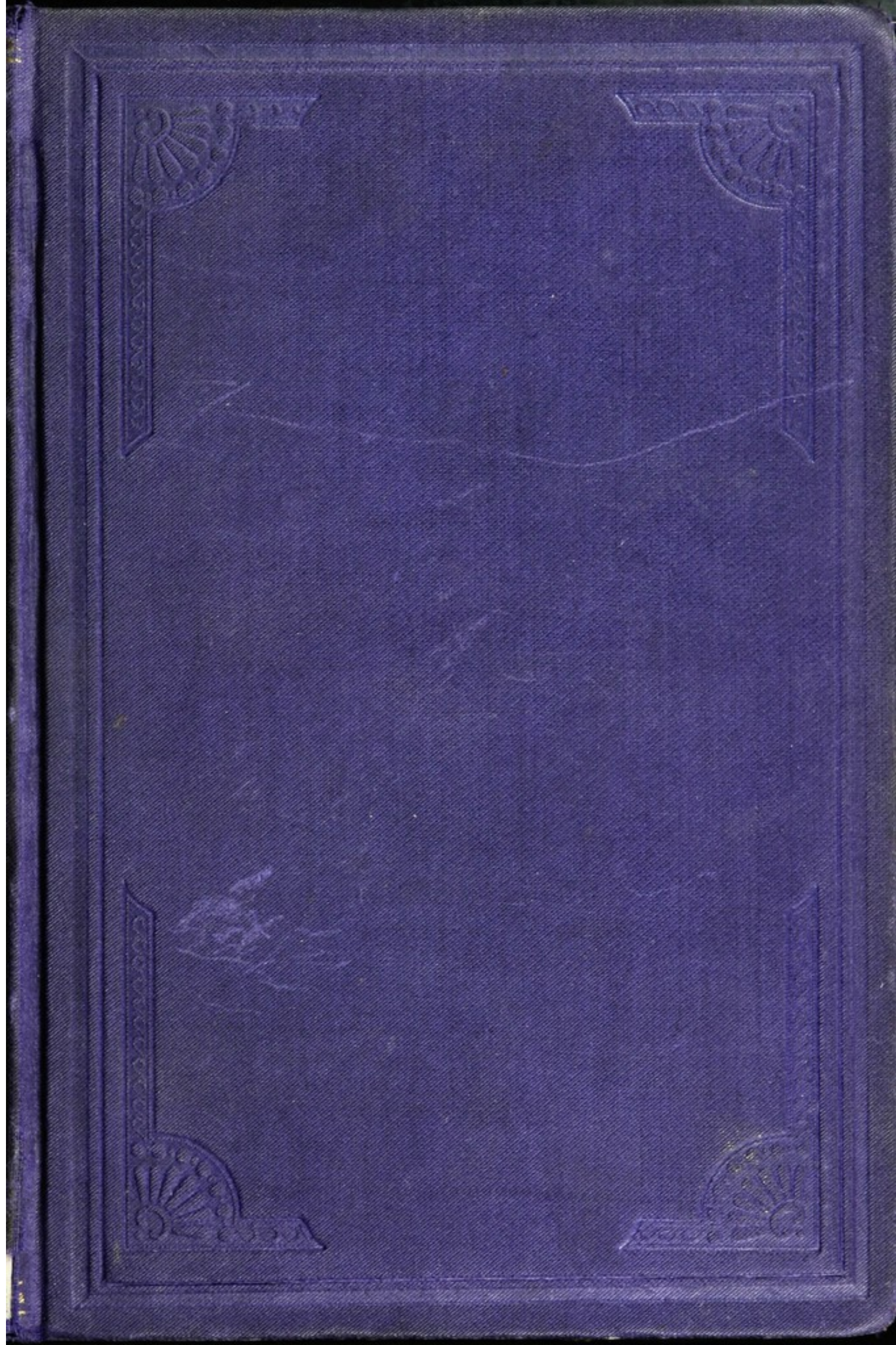
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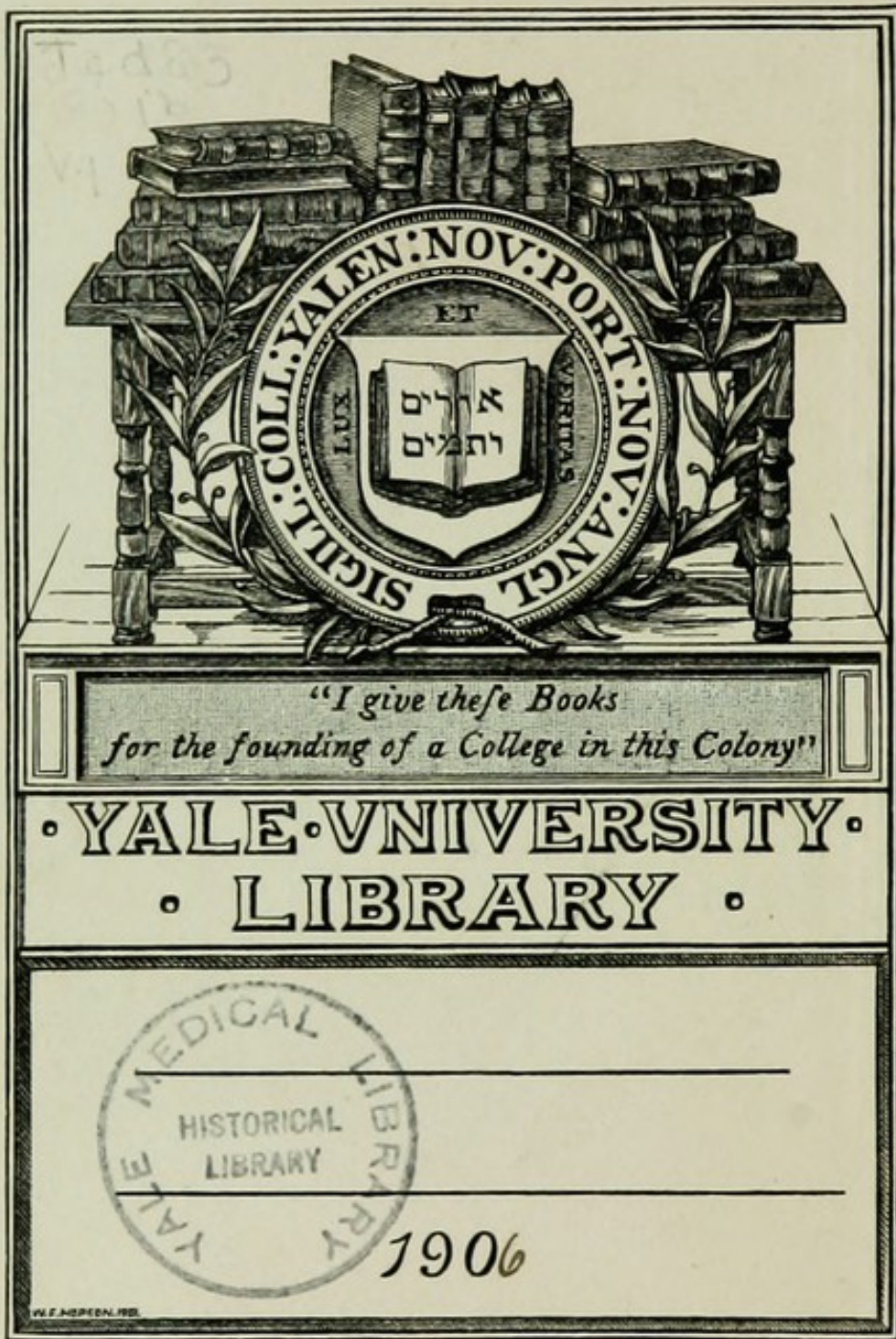
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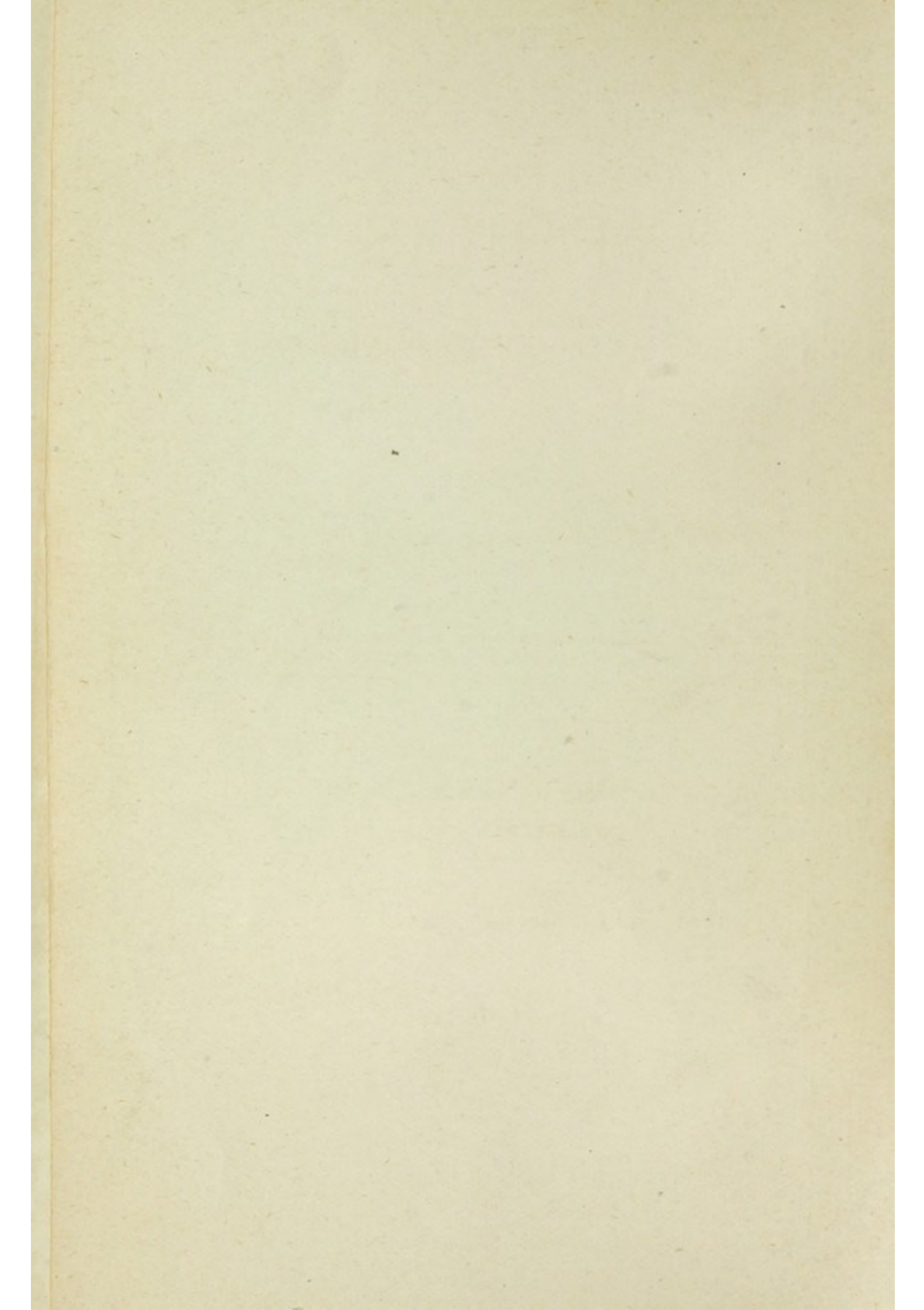


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# SYPHILIS

IN ANCIENT AND PREHISTORIC TIMES.

BY

DR. F. BURET,

PARIS, FRANCE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, WITH NOTES, BY

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*"Syphilis To-Day and Among the Ancients." In Three Volumes.*

VOLUME I.

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*"Nihil sub sole novum."*—ECCLES., i, 10.



PHILADELPHIA AND LONDON:

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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OUR object in writing this book has been to spare the reader a herculean task. It is hardly possible, in fact, no matter how willing one may be, to wade through a couple of thousand volumes, merely for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the history of a disease. Syphilis, since it must be called by its name, is one of those affections which interests everybody: in the first place, those who have it,—a very appreciative audience; and then those who are not affected by it; that is to say, those who run the risk of acquiring it. Do not protest; when you will have read this medico-literary study, if, perchance, you have the courage to go on to the end, you will not dare affirm that you will always be unscathed, for evil, like good, comes upon us while we sleep.

When we contemplate the interminable list of authors who have written upon this disease since the great epidemic of the fifteenth century, and the divergence in their opinions upon the origin and nature of it, one is, in a manner, dazed, and it is difficult to determine where to begin.

It would certainly have been more convenient for us to have first read modern authors, several of whom, such as Hunter, Ricord, Alfred Fournier, Lancereaux, Mauriac, Rollet, and others, have described syphilis in a masterly manner. We might also have remained content with merely reproducing, without confirming them, a number of Greek and Latin quotations, thrown pell-



mell in a host of works of the eighteenth century,—a method which would have considerably lightened our labors. But we have scrupulously studied the text of the authors of antiquity, and with profit; we have been enabled, in this way, to eliminate numerous so-called proofs, which prove nothing, and re-establish in their integrity many of the verses of Martial and of Horace which had been mutilated and rendered unintelligible. Other reasons also influenced us to make our own researches: we have desired to acquire personal impressions from our readings, without being influenced by the opinions of others. Thus, we had scarcely analyzed thirty small works of the sixteenth century before we began to entertain doubts as to the nature of the epidemic of 1494, which the majority of authors look upon as the starting-point of syphilis. We were not loath to believe, at that time, already, that the famous epidemic was not concerned solely with the disease which occupies our attention, but that several venereal or cutaneous affections, without syphilitic virus, must have been described under the general term: *le Mal Français* (the French disease). Ricord, Lancereaux, and others, whose works we read later on, give the same opinion; and we feel happy to coincide with such competent authorities.

We adopted the plan of reading syphilographers in chronological order, from the fifteenth century to our epoch. Then we searched for the traces of syphilis in antiquity, and in this study we followed the degree of antiquity of the literary documents which we have inherited from the people of primitive times.

Our researches, which were commenced in 1887, have now ended; we have analyzed all the authors which we have been able to find in the various libraries of Paris.



In order not to interrupt the easy reading of the work, we have added translations, as exact as possible, but devoid of all pedantry, of all quotations which appear in foreign tongues, be they dead or living. We have also met with translations, and we have most often given the readings of the translators; but, whenever they seemed to us not to reproduce exactly the thoughts of authors, we have permitted ourself to make modifications.

We also desire to state that we have written in plain language, for we are addressing this as much to those interested in science and in letters as to physicians and patients. So that, in order to be understood by all, we have not employed technical terms, except in those instances where decency might be shocked, or for a want of sufficiently explanatory terms in our ordinary language.

To those professional brethren who, losing sight of the end we are aiming at, believe that they should pass severe judgment upon our work on account of the quotations taken from the lighter poetry of antiquity, we will recall the fact that we are sustaining a thesis upon a subject which has been much disputed; and, as a result of this, we have been forced to seek our proofs wherever we could find them. If we analyze Martial, Horace, Juvenal, and many others whose writings are licentious, as a compensation to be borne in mind we draw largely from the Bible, the Fathers of the Church, and the Lives of the Saints. Of course, we cannot ignore the fact that these works could scarcely be placed in the hands of young ladies until after careful expurgation. As proof, we need only the singular mode imagined by the Christian martyr, of whom Palladius speaks, to preserve her virginity despite her executioners.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greek Patrology, vol. xxxiv. Palladius: Lausiaca historia. (See translation in the tenth chapter of this book.)



But the letter which Latour wrote to Ricord, in 1851, when the former was editor-in-chief of *l'Union Médicale*, does not deceive us as to what we are to expect, not having, like the great syphilographer of that time, a "heap" of former publications, nor long years of battling against a myriad of enemies who are continually endeavoring to depreciate the efforts of a man who tries to become marked; it appears as if he was trying to deprive others of something.

We will quote a few fragments from that letter, which precedes the work of Ricord entitled "Lettres sur la Syphilis."<sup>1</sup> We have purposely omitted the eulogistic remarks addressed to the author, in order that it might not be supposed for a moment that our intention is to compare ourself to the master.

Let us let Latour speak: he well knew that patient who, without taking into consideration university or hospital titles, judges a physician by his cravat, his social position, the brim of his hat, the gossip of servants and janitors, and other things, consecrating a man solely upon the manner he pontifies:—

"How happy you must be," says Latour, "not to be at your professional beginning! You would have died as a practitioner. . . . A physician who does not hesitate, miserable man, to relate anecdotes, and who does not fear, imprudent man, to make his reader smile, as is done by him. . . ."

"You did well to begin with solid memoirs, by a large octavo, to elevate yourself up to the heavy folio full of beautiful pictures, before writing your letters. Without this respectable luggage, you risked very much not being regarded as a *serious man*. . . . Instead of putting your audience to sleep, you keep it continu-

<sup>1</sup> Paris, 1851.



ally awake. . . . But there are many persons who do not care to be disturbed in their slumbers."

There is but little to add to these observations, which are based upon the sad experience of facts. In spite of all our precautions, we will infallibly be blamed, either by those unfortunate minds who see morals in peril at the mention of syringe, or by the moralists *ad hoc*, who, returning from the boudoirs *à la mode*, will say that one should not write upon such a subject. But little reck we. Like Martial, we will say to the ones and to the others: "If any one is apt to be scandalized by the nudity of expressions (*lascivam verborum veritatem*),—whose faithful interpretation necessitates crudity,—let him limit himself to reading this introduction, or even be content with the title of the work (*potest epistolâ, vel potius titulo contentus esse*)."

DR. FRED. BURET.

PARIS, November, 1889.



## AUTHOR'S LETTER TO TRANSLATOR.

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*Au Professeur Ohmann-Dumesnil :*

Vous me faites savoir, mon cher confrère, que vous avez traduit mon histoire de la syphilis chez les anciens, et vous me demandez mon autorisation pour publier. Je vous la donne avec un double plaisir, au point de vue de la science d'abord et au point de vue personnel ensuite. En effet, l'auteur le plus modeste ne peut se défendre d'une certaine satisfaction intérieure lorsqu'il voit le fruit de ses travaux recevoir l'approbation éclairée d'un des savants les plus compétents. Quelle preuve d'estime scientifique plus éclatante est-il possible de donner? Vous avez apprécié les efforts, approuvé les conclusions et partagé l'opinion de l'auteur: alors vous avez voulu que vos compatriotes des Etats-Unis pussent tous constater par eux-mêmes que *l'antiquité de la syphilis est désormais un fait acquis.*

A Paris, cette opinion gagne du terrain tous les jours, et elle est adopté par presque tous les jeunes médecins qui pensent pour eux-

*To Professor Ohmann-Dumesnil :*

You have informed me, my dear colleague, that you had translated my history of syphilis among the ancients, and you ask for my authority to publish the translation. I give it to you with twofold pleasure,—first, from a scientific point of view, and, next, from a personal point of view. Indeed, the most modest author cannot refrain from a certain degree of self-satisfaction when he sees the fruit of his labors receive the intelligent approval of a most competent savant. What more brilliant proof of scientific esteem is it possible to furnish? You have appreciated the efforts, approved the conclusions, and shared the opinion of the author: then you desired that your American countrymen should be placed in a position to determine for themselves that *henceforward the antiquity of syphilis is an established fact.*

In Paris, this opinion is daily gaining ground, and it is adopted by nearly all the younger phy-



mêmes. Quant à ceux qui règlent tous leurs gestes sur ceux du *maître*, cela dépend : si le maître choisi est partisan de l'origine américaine de la syphilis—légende encore très en honneur dans le public—ils ne veulent même pas discuter : *magister dixit!* Je constate toutefois que la presse médicale française a fort bien accueilli ce livre, car la plupart des comptes-rendus sont très bienveillants : maintenant ce sont les hommes de science de la plus grande république du monde qui vont exprimer leur avis.

Comme auteur et comme syphilographe, j'accompagne de mes vœux les plus sincères l'œuvre de vulgarisation de mon distingué collègue le Professeur de Syphilographie des Hôpitaux de St. Louis ; et, étant donnés la largeur d'idées, l'intelligence et l'esprit de progrès qui caractérisent la grande nation américaine, je ne doute pas que cette publication ne réussisse au-delà de ses désirs.

DR. F. BURET.

PARIS, 1er Mai, 1891.

sicians who think for themselves. As to those who regulate all their movements by those of the *master*, it depends : if the chosen master be a partisan of the American origin of syphilis—a legend still held in great honor by the public—they do not even wish to discuss it : *magister dixit!* I have noticed, however, that the French medical press has received this book very well, for the majority of the reviews are very kind ; now, it is the scientific men of the greatest republic in the world who will express their opinions.

As author and as syphilographer, I contribute my best and most sincere wishes to the work of dissemination of my distinguished colleague, the Professor of Syphilography in St. Louis ; and, taking into consideration the breadth of ideas, the intelligence, and the talent which characterize the great American nation, I have no doubt that this publication will succeed beyond his expectations.

DR. F. BURET.

PARIS, May 1, 1891.



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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IN offering this translation, the purpose has been a twofold one,—first, to afford those who are unable to read French an opportunity of enjoying a very interesting work; secondly, to show upon what proofs the antiquity of syphilis rests. Of a necessity, the proofs must be sparse, and, at the same time, of a rather weak nature. The very nature of things presupposes this. The interpretations which are placed upon many constitute the real proof; and those which appear the most reasonable should, of necessity, be adopted. A careful perusal of the contents of this volume will demonstrate the ingenuity of the author, as well as his painstaking efforts to obtain evidence. This herculean task occupied several years, and, in some cases, fortune seemed to have favored Dr. Buret in his efforts.

No assumption could possibly be made that the author's thesis has been *proven*; but the mass of evidence which he has gathered is of such a character as to induce an unprejudiced reader to incline very strongly to the view that syphilis is very ancient, and that its appearance in Europe did not date from the siege of Naples, but was most probably anterior to it, existing in such a form that but little attention was paid to it; and not until it constituted a large and fatal epidemic did physicians study it. Fortune-tellers, charlatans, prostitutes, *et id omne genus*, had, before that time, constituted the principal practitioners in the line of venereal diseases. As is pointed out by the author, another



reason existed for this non-publication of any knowledge physicians might have acquired, in ancient times, at least. The reason was, that venereal diseases were looked upon as the results of the wrath of some offended deity, and to tamper with them would have been considered a sacrilege. Prayers and offerings to the deity, aided by simple remedies, constituted the treatment.

In addition to this, these diseases were considered "shameful" (*morbus indecens*), and, being located, for the most part, upon the "secret parts," were not to be exposed to the critical or inquiring gaze of strangers. Moreover, women were not permitted to expose themselves to any men but their husbands; so that it can be easily understood how the open debauchery could serve as a prolific means of spreading venereal disease. The migrations of Orientals, the invasions and returns of armies, all contributed to a further dissemination of the evil. In fact, it can be safely asserted that these diseases are as old as prostitution itself, and a necessary appanage of that pursuit.

A few words in regard to the description and treatment of syphilis given by the author. In the former, only the broad, salient lines are sketched. As regards therapeutics, we find a true reflection of one of the French schools; but every one who has had experience will differ more or less from the lines laid down, unless that experience has been gained in the same school. So that a criticism of the methods advocated would be superfluous, and each one is very apt to pursue that course which seems best to him from the results attained. Still, as a reflex of French methods, it cannot fail from being interesting.

So far as the translation is concerned, a close adherence to the text has been the main object.



Elegance of diction has been sacrificed to exact interpretation, and this has necessitated the occasional use of Gallicisms. That these faults may be overlooked by the indulgent reader is the earnest hope of

THE TRANSLATOR.



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# SYPHILIS

TO-DAY AND AMONG THE ANCIENTS.<sup>1</sup>

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## CHAPTER I.

IN WHAT MODERN POX, THAT IS TO SAY, SYPHILIS,  
CONSISTS.

Syphilis ! à ce nom que, saisi de scrupule,  
Un vulgaire lecteur s'épouvante et recule,  
Qu'il inflige à mon œvre un pudibond mépris,  
Qu'importe? Je m'adresse à ces graves esprits  
Dout l'œil philosophique embrasse pour domaine  
Tout ce qui touche au sort de la nature humaine,  
Ceux qui n'ont pas l'orgueil de croire au-dessous d'eux  
Ce que le monde appelle effrayant ou hideux,  
Et qui, de l'ignorance affrontant l'anathème,  
Sèment au champ public la verité . . . quand même !

BARTHÉLEMY.<sup>2</sup>

FIRST of all, what is syphilis? Everybody talks about it, many have it, and very few know in what it consists. What heresies do we not daily hear retailed in regard to the subject! Some mistake it with blennorrhagia (flow), and with an appearance of reason. In fact, it is scarcely earlier than the beginning of this century that blennorrhagic urethritis was no longer considered as one of the initiatory symptoms of syphilis.

<sup>1</sup>This subject, too extensive to be included within the limits of a volume, will form the subject of several publications. After the appearance of the work on Syphilis Among the Ancients, will appear one on Syphilis in the Middle Ages.

<sup>2</sup>Syphilis, a poem in two cantos. Paris, 1841.



Besides, did not Grisolle say, not twenty-five years ago, "Following several blennorrhagias, diverse accidents of constitutional syphilis manifest themselves"?<sup>1</sup> This is what he calls *virulent* blennorrhagia, regarding as too exclusive the opinion of Ricord, who did not admit of syphilitic infection by blennorrhagia alone, without a chancre of the urethral canal. Other patients become re-assured when you diagnosticate syphilis, and they ask in what it differs from pox. Do not smile, for this question has been often asked of me.

I have promised a talk rather than a treatise, and I will take good care not to submit a didactic description of the disease with which we are concerned. I have no other object—and in this I am sincere—than to furnish the public with a number of facts which are almost unknown, and yet very curious. Those who desire a book which is purely scientific will have only the *embarras de choix*: there exist a few hundreds.<sup>2</sup> In a later publication, when we examine the modern opinions of syphilis, we will make it a point to call attention to the better works.

Let us end this digression, which has already been too long, and state in a few words what is to be understood by *syphilis* in the year of grace, 1889, and 1891 as well.

It is a complex disease, having an evolution characterized by three distinct periods: the first two, *contagious from their inception*, have their seat over all the integument,—the skin and mucous membranes; the third at-

<sup>1</sup> *Traité de path. int.* Paris, 1864. *Treatise on Pathology.*

<sup>2</sup> Charles Girtanner has devoted an entire volume to the critical bibliography of 1912 works on Syphilis, published from 1495 to 1794; that is to say, within a period of three hundred years. It may not be superfluous to add that a great number of authors, especially of the sixteenth century, copied each other.



tacks the subcutaneous connective tissue and the different organs,—the bones, the nerve-tissues, glands, viscera, etc.; beyond this it is *not contagious*.

*First Period.*—Limiting itself to a local accident, at the site of contact itself, it consists of one or sometimes several chancres: this is what has been, by consent, denominated the *primary lesion*. Let us remark at once that the term *chancre*, sanctioned by usage, is a misnomer so far as syphilis is concerned; at least, in the majority of cases. As a matter of fact, the primary lesion in no way corresponds with the conception of chancre, which might be rightfully entertained, if the only reason were its Latin derivation (*cancer*).<sup>1</sup> One immediately thinks of a sore that eats, and nothing is farther from the truth, as we shall see.

The *typical* syphilitic chancre, also called *infecting chancre* and *indurated chancre*,—due to the parchment sensation it gives, as a rule, upon attempting to bend it between the thumb and index,—is naught but a simple

<sup>1</sup> It may be objected that there are syphilitic chancres which are gangrenous, through *excess of inflammation*, according to Ricord; others, phagedenic, through *excess of induration*; others, again, are diphtheritic, etc. I will not deny this, but contend that they are pathological varieties; at least, to-day. Ricord, in his *Atlas Iconographique*, has illustrated a few marked cases, but he carefully chose them from thousands of cases. As for myself, since sixteen years that I have been examining patients, I have scarcely seen two or three such cases, and, be it understood, in a prolific field, which agrees perfectly with the theories of the illustrious master. I had an opportunity of observing a phagedenic chancre of syphilitic origin in 1873, at the hospital of Boulogne-sur-Mer; another at l'hôpital St. Sauveur of Lille, in the venereal division, to which I was attached as an externe during 1874; and the third, five or six years ago, in the service of Dr. Benjamin Auger, at Lariboisière. But, during the many months I passed at Lourcine, I did not have the good fortune of seeing a single one. And yet, in many cases of syphilitic chancres called phagedenic, I am not certain that they were not *mixed* chancres; that is to say, a sort of fusion of the two varieties of chancre. I cannot dilate any further upon this subject, for it would only be possible to discuss all the sides of this question in a didactic treatise.



erosion, an excoriation<sup>1</sup> if you wish, markedly superficial, which does not deepen, scooped out, with marked round contours, never suppurating, and exuding a colorless, transparent fluid, giving the ulcerated surface a varnished appearance. Its color is, in general, a brick-red, sometimes a lardaceous gray. Most often the syphilitic chancre is single; at times several exist, but they have all appeared at the same time and disappear together. And, as a last symptom, which is extremely important in the diagnosis, there is *no pain* elicited by pressure. Honestly, was that the conception you had formed, my dear reader, of the *syphilitic chancre*?

Now listen, for comparison, to the description of the *soft chancre*, also called the *simple chancre*, non-infecting, *flying chancre*, which does not get into the blood, as the popular expression goes. But this flying chancre, which annoys the patient without frightening him, may become phagedenic,<sup>2</sup> serpiginous, or even both at the same time; that is to say, which eats and advances.

The *soft chancre* rarely exists singly: often several chancres appear, simultaneously or successively, by auto-inoculation. We no longer deal with a simple excoriation, it is a true loss of substance: here the word *chancre* does not belie its etymology. The skin is destroyed, the edges are perpendicular, as if punched out, and slightly undermined. A slight serration is observed along the edges, which are red and terminating in a white line, having the form of a collarette. The bottom is grayish; suppuration is abundant and highly contagious. The slightest contact produces *acute pain*.

<sup>1</sup> Women will always tell you that they have *scratched* themselves with the finger-nail, in order to explain the presence of the *excoriation* which is so stubborn and which has not healed at the end of a month.

<sup>2</sup> In Greek, *φαγέδαινα*, a devouring hunger; in Latin, *phagedæna*, —the destructive ulcers described by Celsus. (See Chapter XI.)



In the phagedenic chancre, the ulcer increases peripherally or advances, eating right and left, almost in a zigzag. It penetrates into the connective tissue, which it destroys, and under the skin, which it perforates at various points. Sometimes one of the extremities cicatrizes as the chancre pursues its destructive march. Its invading and serpiginous course is rarely regular, and the disturbances are difficult to repair. They may even bring on death. I saw a case of this nature at Lourcine, when I was interne at that hospital, in 1881.

CASE I. (*Personal*).—A poor girl of 23, in the *salle* Fracastor (formerly St. Marie), had upon the internal portion of the right thigh a simple chancre, which had increased in depth and extent. At the time I saw the patient, the chancre formed a very regular circle 10 centimetres in diameter, without exaggeration; the skin and connective tissue were absolutely destroyed, as well as the sheath of the muscles, which latter appeared naked, admirably dissected. One would have said that the coverings had been removed with a punch, and that a part of the skin had been cut out with scissors and Scarpa's triangle<sup>1</sup> prepared for demonstration. The unfortunate died of exhaustion about eight months after the first appearance of the chancre. It is the only death from a venereal disease that I had an opportunity of witnessing during my stay at Lourcine, and yet I observed many patients in that hospital; it would be difficult to tell the exact number within a few hundreds.

So, one can die of a non-infecting chancre, for this woman was not syphilitic; but it must be admitted that this is rare, especially nowadays.

A last point to note, and I will have done with this parallel. The soft chancre is sometimes accompanied by an adenitis, that is, of an inflammation of a ganglion in the groin (one only, ordinarily), commonly called a *bubo* (*Βουβών*, groin), or "kernel," which is always painful, and often suppurates. With the primary lesion of

<sup>1</sup> Scarpa's Triangle: An anatomical region which is dissected preparatory to examinations.



syphilis—indurated chancre, if you will—several ganglia are engorged, especially at first, in the neighborhood of the genitalia. This ganglion, which is sometimes as large as a walnut, is known, in hospital slang, under the name of *préfet of the groin*. This ganglionic pleiad, very hard to the touch, is *absolutely indolent and never suppurates*. It is not a bubo, then, to speak properly.

When these buboes suppurate, the syphilis is accompanied by gonorrhœa, soft chancre, or scrofula, or a neighboring wound; but that it could occur from the syphilitic process, I would almost regard as an impossibility. Thierry de Héry, lieutenant-general of the king (Henry II), knew already, in the sixteenth century, that there were chancres not followed by secondary accidents, and that the suppurating bubo did not belong to syphilis. He had then foreseen the duality of the chancre established in our days by Ricord in an irrefutable manner. "As often appears in many who have bad and malignant ulcers, which will be difficult to cure, because nature makes an effort to evacuate the said venom by those parts, and *if a bubo appears*, otherwise called a 'kernel,' which receives the said fluxion, the ulcer will be healed and cured in a short time, and *the patient will be free from pox.*"<sup>1</sup> Besides, we have stated that the indurated chancre itself does not suppurate, and we shall see shortly that the secondary accidents do not suppurate either, or very slightly, this second period being a vegetating phase rather than a destructive one.

<sup>1</sup> The following is the original: Comme souvent appert en plusieurs ayant ulcères cacoeths et malings, qui seront rébelles à curer, pour se que nature s'efforce d'évacuer ledict venin par icelles parties, et s'il survient un bubon, autrement dict poulain, qui reçoive la dicte fluxion, en brief l'ulcère sera curé et guarý; et sera le patient exempt de la verolle. Thierry de Héry: La Méthode curative de la maladie vénérienne, vulgairément appelée grosse vérolle. Paris, 1552. The Curative Method of the Venereal Disease commonly called the Big Pox.



In addition, the soft chancre appears immediately, two or three days after the infecting intercourse, rarely after eight days, whilst the syphilitic virus gathers its forces, as it were, and it is only at the end of twenty-five days, or one month on an average, that it sends its first rocket, the indurated chancre.

Such are the principal characteristics, hastily sketched, which serve to distinguish between the *small excoriation*, more or less indurated, the prologue of syphilis, and the soft chancre which may, as we have seen above, not be at all *simple*. To be complete, it would be necessary to enter into many other details, and describe, for example, *mixed chancres*, which contain both elements, and put the physician on the wrong track, at least at the beginning; but we would overstep the bounds which we have set for ourselves.

This exposition of the subject, as will be seen, is already long enough, but we believe it indispensable to enable the reader, who is a stranger to the art of medicine, to appreciate the value of our arguments. We desire to prove, text in hand, that syphilis is as old as prostitution; and, the whole world is agreed in the recognition of the fact that the latter is not precisely young.

The indurated chancre lasts in the neighborhood of four to six weeks, sometimes less, rarely more, and heals spontaneously: this is why we seldom have an opportunity of seeing it in women. As it produces no pain, and it only has to choose some fold to conceal itself, it is only by accident that the unfortunate possessor of a chancre notices it. And then she must feel worried at the persistence of the *nail scratch* to determine to seek the advice of a physician; or she thinks herself cunning in cauterizing it, and the erosion becomes larger with-



out healing any faster. It is infinitely preferable to apply morning and evening some inert powder, take internal treatment, and patiently await the secondary accidents, which will not fail to make their appearance in six weeks or two months.

According to certain authors, the chancre might be wanting and syphilis commence with the secondary period; this is what happens in the newborn who are syphilitic by heredity. But is this possible in ordinary cases of direct contagion? M. Lancereaux says yes; Ricord has always formally denied it. Which is right? Our authority is not sufficient to decide the question. It will be conceded, however, that the chancre is sometimes so small that it may pass unperceived, even in a man. Here is an illustrative example which to us appears conclusive:—

CASE II. (*Personal*).—M. G., aged 21, student in one of our faculties, applied for advice, June, 1886. He asked for advice concerning a *hernia*, which had come on some time since. I examined the affected part and recognized, at a glance, the presence of an enormous bubo, which the touch showed to be very hard and absolutely indolent.

“Sir,” said I, “this is not a hernia; it is a ganglionic engorgement with special characteristics which enable me to state that you have syphilis.”

“But I have nothing else; I can swear to it!”

“Pardon me; you must have a chancre. Where, I do not know yet; but you have one, necessarily, along the course of the lymphatics, which connect with the inguinal ganglia.”

“But, I repeat it; that I haven’t the least abrasion.”

“Let us search for it together: are you willing?”

“Oh! as much as you please.”

Not admitting at all the famous *bubon d’emblée*, at least in our climate, I examine the anus first, as the patient states that he has seen nothing, and I find nothing. Then, going to the penis, I uncover the glans; it is intact; nothing in the balano-preputial sulcus; nothing in the urethral canal; nothing upon the lower limbs; nothing, nothing. The situation was becoming painful. And yet there is one, thought I, paraphrasing the celebrated expression of Galileo. Finally, in sheer



desperation, I exposed the small folds which exist on each side of the frenum, and I discovered, on the right, a small, superficial erosion of an angry, red color, of the size of an ordinary *pin's head*, and distinctly indurated.

"Here is your chancre."

"Is that all?"

"It is enough, believe me."

The young student, although not thoroughly convinced, still followed the treatment I counseled, and showed me, a few weeks later, a superb roseola, the confirmatory mark of the diagnosis.

"Cure me quickly," said he, "for in two months I get married."

"You would never do such a thing! Wait at least until you have passed the virulent period; and between now and a few years——"

"It is impossible, doctor."

"But your action is dishonorable!"

"We will occupy separate beds."

"For how many hours?"

"Well, if you insist, I will tell my intended; but I cannot back out."

"Then it is a different matter. If the girl accepts, I have nothing more to say."

*Epilogue.*—Six months later I saw my patient, accompanied by his lawful spouse, who had, upon her own testimony, been honestly forewarned. The continence which the young husband had proposed having never gone beyond an intention, I was called upon to cauterize the vulvar syphilides of the one and palatine vault of the other. They left last year (1888) to go abroad in a pretty satisfactory condition.

As we are considering proofs, let us continue. We have already stated that the primary lesion might last less than a month; here is a very marked case:—

CASE III. (*Personal*).—A young man of 22 years, M. Paul D., studying in a military school, came to see me, October, 1887, to consult me regarding a small abrasion of the size of a lentil, and which had lasted five days. He would have paid no attention to it, said he, had I not told him previously to beware of the least erosion of the genitals. The abrasion, as is the rule, was located on the prepuce, near the balano-preputial sulcus, close to the frenum, on the right side. Very marked induration, cartilaginous in character.

On a voyage to Algeria he had had, on his return, intimate relations with a public girl of Marseilles. From that time, about twenty-five days, he had not been able to get out of school; so that he was



certain as to the impossibility of having acquired the lesion in some other locality at a later date. I did not hesitate to diagnose *syphilis*, despite the doubtful looks of the patient, who believed with difficulty that such a small thing could justify such a large word, but, nevertheless, commenced the mercurial treatment, which I promptly prescribed.

The chancre, simply powdered morning and evening, healed in *twelve days*, and the induration persisted, as is usual. A month later I saw my patient. Over the scar of the chancre there existed an ulcerous plaque, together with two or three others in the neighborhood. Upon the body, a discrete papular roseola, which rapidly disappeared under internal treatment and steam baths.

*January, 1889.*—I received a call from my patient, whom I had lost sight of for several months. He is as healthy as possible, with the exception of a few syphilides which appear from time to time upon his mucous membranes and rapidly disappear. He is continuing the intermittent treatment which I advised.

This case is interesting in two respects: First, because it demonstrates that the appearance of the chancre may be transitory, and, as a sequence, may sometimes be regarded as herpes when the induration is not distinct; secondly, because it shows that specific treatment, given from the beginning, does not retard, as has been contended, secondary symptoms to the extent of causing one to abandon the idea of syphilis.

Commence by first making your diagnoses well, you who contradict; give mercury immediately, which will be time gained by your patients, and spare us all those so-called discoveries and idle objections which facts disprove or reduce to nothing.

*Second Period.*—The local accident has healed or will heal, and the patient observes a light maculation about the waist or upon the chest; small, red spots, lenticular, with or without elevation, covered or not with epidermic scales. This is *roseola*. There exist a number of varieties; but as we cannot enter into details, we describe what ordinarily transpires.



This roseola may be wanting; but most often it is the first apparent symptom. Sometimes, but rarely, it is psoriasis, or else pustulo-crustaceous syphilides; that is to say, large crusts, resembling pretty much, except in color, macaroons on a piece of paper. But these cases are almost pathological varieties now. They are observed, in general, but much smaller, upon the scalp (crusts of the head), in the beard and eyebrows.

Roseola may be abundant or discrete; its color is of a delicate rose at the beginning, rapidly changing to a coppery red; often then the spots, whether papular or not, become surrounded with an epidermic collarette, which is very characteristic. At other times the roseola spreads itself *en masse* or in irregular islets; then it is styled *erythematous*. So much for the body; there are yet other varieties of which we will speak, if there be occasion to do so. This roseola may cover the entire trunk and limbs; it is rare in the face, and fortunately so. However, it may show itself upon the forehead as a diadem of papules,—the crown of Venus (*corona Veneris*). Roseola is cured by baths; we will speak of this under the head of treatment.

Nine times out of ten the hair falls out, but rarely in its entirety. This is the *alopecia*. The beard, the eyebrows, and eyelashes sometimes fall out, but more rarely. The only treatment for alopecia is the general treatment of syphilis.

In the mouth, on the lips, the internal surface of the cheeks, the tonsils, the palate, the tongue, are frequently found, in greater or less abundance, ulcerated papular syphilides, often surrounded by a bright-red areola, and covered with a whitish secretion, which is very characteristic. These lesions heal rapidly under cauterizations and gargles,—always with internal treatment,—but are



numerous under the influence of alcohol and tobacco-smoke. The posterior cervical ganglia are engaged like those of the groin, but are equally indolent, and never suppurate.

About the anus, on the penis and vulva, are generally encountered papular or papulo-hypertrophic syphilides, also called *mucous patches*, and which heal under cauterizations and lotions.

The mucous patches, or, to be more exact, the syphilides, which have their seat on the genitalia, affect two principal forms, the ulcerative and the hypertrophic, with all the intermediary forms. The ulcerative form has a preference for the cicatrix of the primary lesion, which leads patients to suppose that their chancre has re-appeared. The hypertrophic form has for its sites of predilection the vulva and anus. This is easily understood; in the first there is more room than on the penis; secondly, those parts being symmetrical and in juxtaposition, reciprocally erode each other and retain the acrid and irritating secretion, thus forming the most favorable soil for the production of vegetating syphilides. As a matter of fact, other things being equal, and the question of soil being left apart, we see vulvar syphilides less frequently in those women who have regular habits of cleanliness, and they diminish in a marked manner, without any treatment, in filthy girls by the sole use of baths.<sup>1</sup>

The papules sometimes form, especially upon the internal surface of the labia majora and buttocks, elevations 1 centimetre in height, more or less large, constituting a true ridge, and ulcerated on the free surface. The liquid which oozes is not pus, in the strict acceptation of the term; it is a sort of yellowish serum, with

<sup>1</sup> This may be daily observed at l'hôpital de Lourcine.



leucocytes, if you wish; very fetid, having a characteristic odor, which is more marked in inverse proportion to the woman's cleanliness.

All these lesions vary considerably, according as the soil is scrofulous or healthy, according to the age of the syphilitic infection, or the physiological condition and habits of temperance or excesses of the subject.

I have seen, at Lourcine, poor girls come to the *consultation* armed with a syphilis which they had nursed with jealous care for six or eight months, and fed with torrents of alcohol and an incalculable number of cigarettes. Add to that loss of sleep and its consequences, picture to yourselves the daily assaults of foul patrons, whom nothing could defile, either physically or morally, —walking masses of rottenness,—and you may have an idea of their state upon their arrival at the hospital.

As soon as they step into the room, a peculiar odor makes you retch; the diagnosis is already made. It would be difficult to describe the sight which presents itself to the physician. The genitalia, hidden by the syphilides, sometimes no longer present a human form.

All this heals rapidly, and *without leaving any traces*, under specific (mercurial) treatment, baths, lotions, and cauterizations. In cases like the above it generally requires three or four months to *bleach* the patients. Under ordinary circumstances, if the patient be tractable, the cleaning-up may be done in two months, sometimes in six weeks or less. All depends upon the extent of the havoc.

I will only mention, for the purpose of a reminder, the interdigital mucous patches found upon the feet, and syphilitic onychia, a special affection of the matrix of the nail. I have also seen in one of my patients, in 1883, a group of papulo-hypertrophic syphilides in the



right axilla; a number of physicians of Brussels (she was a Belgian) were unable to give this affection a name, although it had lasted over a year, if we are to believe her. It is true that she presented no other lesion. I placed her under constitutional treatment, and lightly cauterized. Everything disappeared in less than a month, the disease first and the patient next.

Next, covering all, we have a special anæmia, which yields to mercury and tonics. For mercury, which was abused in the sixteenth century, but so unjustly condemned in our times, when we know how to give it, cures the anæmia of the syphilitic, in whom it attacks the syphilis, and not the constitution.

This does not mean that all this procession of physical ornaments may not relapse. Let the patient, who believes himself cured at the first truce, completely abandon internal treatment, take to strong liquors, and be a little too valiant in the *tête-à-tête*,<sup>1</sup> and before two months everything will have returned. It follows, then, that one must be temperate, well-nourished, avoid excesses of all kinds, and follow the intermittent treatment for the required number of years, if there never appeared the slightest sore. Do not forget, you who are syphilitic, that the sword of Damocles is continually suspended over your heads during the secondary period, and that, because you fail to follow the advice of a well-informed physician—specialist or other, so long as he knows syphilis—you expose yourself to bitter regrets, if not remorse. “*Maxima debetur puero reverentia*,”<sup>2</sup> says Juvenal; I would add, in a different train of

<sup>1</sup> The results of recent observations of M. Diday (of Lyons) show that venereal excesses paralyze the good effects of antisiphilitic treatment.

<sup>2</sup> The greatest respect is due to the child.



thought, *even before conception*. To those who understand, I salute.

There are still other symptoms less prominent, which I will merely mention. First, the *syphilitic fever*, which certain authors of the sixteenth century, Ulrich von Hutten,<sup>1</sup> for example, have perfectly recognized; so that it is not a recent discovery, in spite of what has been said. Next, the *nocturnal cephalalgia*, a sort of headache, giving the sensation of a band of iron pressing more especially on the occiput, and commencing in the evening, only to cease in the morning. The authors of the sixteenth century give, upon this subject, rather curious explanations, which we will publish in due course of time in our third volume. There has been a great deal of discussion upon the causes of this cephalalgia, which certain modern syphilographers imagine they have invented; it has been regarded as the consequence of precocious tertiary lesions of the skull, but it seems to be simply due to a general heat, and that of the bed in particular. If this was the true explanation, we could easily understand why this cephalalgia is, above all, nocturnal. This symptom, whose duration is ordinarily very short (eight to fifteen days), is generally observed, when it exists, at the beginning of the secondary period. We propose to take up this question later on.

Lesions affecting the eyes (keratitis, iritis, etc.) are also seen, but not very frequently; finally, articular pains, and even true arthritis, which have been well described by my colleague, Dr. de Fontaine,<sup>2</sup> surgeon-in-chief of the factories of Creusot.

<sup>1</sup> Ulrich von Hutten: *De guaiaci medicina et morbo gallico*. Moguntiae, MDXIX. *The French Disease and its Treatment by Guaiac*. Mainz, 1519.

<sup>2</sup> Léon de Fontaine: *De la syphilis articulaire (on articular syphilis)*, Thèse de Paris, 1883.



I will not dwell upon the distinction of the syphilides into *pustular*, *vesicular*, *bullous*, *tubercular*, etc.; let it suffice to know that they appear upon the skin; and when you observe anything abnormal upon your *external tegument*, consult your physician first. But beware of those healers of urinals, who have received their diplomas from the bill-posters, and who have received decorations most often in the police court. Advice costs nothing, it is true; but the medicines (!!!) which must be taken are rated according to the *face* of the patient, from twenty francs up to the infinite.

Before passing to the tertiary period, let us devote a few lines to the period called the *transition* stage. We first have iritis, a late secondary accident, but most often a transition lesion: it is not grave, providing that treatment is taken. Then, certain lesions of the skin, and especially of the cellular tissue, notably of the tongue.<sup>1</sup> These lesions of the cellular tissue properly belong to the tertiary period; but as they are coincident, at the time of their appearance, with certain late secondary eruptions of the skin (*palmar* and *plantar* syphilides, for example),<sup>2</sup> the patient is said to be going through the period of transition, and he is given the mixed treatment (mercuric salts combined with iodides). Sometimes sarcocele is also noticed, but this is rather observable at the tertiary period. [The author fails to mention the fact that iritis is frequently an early secondary symptom, as well as the squamous syphilides of the palms and soles.]

<sup>1</sup> Ulcerations; exfoliative dermatitis in segments of circles, or epithelial glossitis, etc.

<sup>2</sup> These desquamative syphilides, whose site of predilection is the palm of the hand and sole of the foot, follow the same course as the epithelial glossitis. Each is a circle, at first small, which goes on increasing, and whose circumference consists of a series of segments of circles.



*Third Period.*—Let us now approach that famous tertiary period in which the disease is no longer dangerous except to the syphilitic himself. Up to the present it was relatively nothing but roses; the danger existed only for others. Let me hasten to add, however, that in a patient who has treated himself well, and who *watches*, tertiary accidents, as a rule, are reduced to but a small thing, and often never appear at all; for they are then postponed to such an extent that the patient, before their appearance, has the time to attain the age at which death comes, no matter from what cause. Life being something relative, it is plain that if, for example, we prolong the life of a consumptive to the age of eighty in such a manner that he dies of apoplexy or syncope, we may consider him as having been cured of his bacilli (with or without *commas*).

We have already stated that the third and last period was, above all, directed to the connective tissue. Besides, the syphilitic virus, in a general way, is characterized by a proliferation of connective tissue. This is why alcoholic beverages are harmful to syphilitics. In addition to this, drunkards are predisposed to a host of other diseases which owe their origin to proliferation with condensation of the connective or cellular tissue. I will first mention cirrhosis of the liver, always mortal; then, cardiac lesions. As a matter of fact, the poor valves are continually bathed in a blood saturated with rum, and shrivel and become insufficient, from which an impediment in the circulation of the blood ensues. It is a recognized fact that the heart is a suction- and force-pump, the valves acting as movable valves. Try, in watering your garden, to use a pump whose valves are not large enough, and you will see, while doing double the amount of labor, how much water you have drawn



at the end of the day. It is the same thing with the heart; disciples of Bacchus, think of your valves! The brain-substance, the spinal cord, the nerves, all yield to the pernicious influence of alcohol. Add to this a syphilis treated with contempt, and contemplate the result!

I would not put it down as a rule that drunkards are the only ones who can have serious tertiary lesions. It must not be forgotten that there are certain unfortunate cases in which, outside of alcoholism, syphilis produces deep ravages. But it is exceedingly rare when patients have faithfully followed out treatment. Let me say, *en passant*, that a certain number of patients, fortunately in the minority, have had dealings either with quacks who repudiate mercury<sup>1</sup> and treat their patients in a fantastic manner, or with homœopaths who gave them candy and clear water. Alas! these mountebanks are not the only ones who boast of not using mercury. I could mention a hospital service in Paris in which the liquid metal has been banished. If the quacks, the charlatans, the homœopaths, abuse their patients, either by their infernal drugs, which are worse than the disease, or by their inoffensive confectionery, which does not stop the invading march of the trouble, what matters it to

<sup>1</sup> All can see, not without pain, if they are physicians, the glaring advertisements posted in certain monuments (urinals): they are ornamented with colored pictures, in which a conjunctivitis is given as a consequence of injections or strictures!!! Another one of these horripilators bears the legend: *Effects of Mercury—Cancer of the Tongue; Amputation.* This is the flower: an injection in the urinary canal, causing an inflammation of the ocular serosa, was a dream; but mercury causing cancer is rather stiff! There are some more ignorant or boldly dishonest, but they are under the protection of the laws. When will the authorities, if they do not wish to defend the interests of the medical fraternity against the progressive invasion of certain rascals, with or without diplomas, protect at least the patient by regulating the bill-posting? Of course, it is only a matter of the public health (1889).



you, say you? Why do they go to them? This is true; but when a man of talent, and so situated as to make pupils, is concerned, the consequences are serious. At l'hôpital St. Louis one can see at one's leisure the consequences in the miserable patients suffering from serious tertiary manifestations.

A few lines of contemporaneous history will furnish an idea of the good faith of the celebrities of dead walls. In 1882, while I was an interne at l'hôpital de Bicêtre, one of our colleagues in the same institution conceived the idea of calling upon one of these fustians of drugging disguised as doctors.<sup>1</sup> He penetrates the blind office, where one enters *without speaking to the janitor*, and finds himself face to face with the preponent. Our friend relates a fictitious case. After the semblance of an examination, the seller gives him some product guaranteed to be *vegetable, without mercury*, in accordance with the handbill. A chemist, entrusted with the analysis of the pills which constituted the basis of treatment, found them composed solely of *protiodide of mercury!* Knowing that mercury is the only specific, after having maligned the poor metal in order to attract easily frightened persons, he gives it, right or wrong, under another label. If he only gave it to syphilitics alone! But no; each one is provided with his *little package*. This is logical: where would the profit be in *free consultations* if the patient did not carry off fifteen or twenty francs' worth of drugs, either useful or not? Let us return to our subject.

It may be objected that syphilis is a disease of well-defined cycles, that it has its three distinct periods, and that, no matter what is done, the patient will get well

<sup>1</sup> Many are only *officiers de santé*; a few convictions, which were published, have shown that certain ones had no diplomas of any description.



of his chancre, of his mucous or cutaneous syphilides, and will enter upon the tertiary phase without retaining any traces of his anterior lesions. Granted; but it is precisely from the point of view of this tertiary period that we are discussing the subject. The first two never did constitute any source of anxiety to us; they are disagreeable and inconvenient, but rarely painful. Mercury, administered according to the classical rules, helps nature in her reparative work; it eliminates itself by way of the secretions, after having hastened the resorption of that proliferated cellular tissue, whose exuberance manifests itself in a manner as varied as it is complex. When the tertiary period arrives,—if it comes on at all,—one-half of the work is done and iodine is sufficient. The paradoxical master, to whom we have alluded, gives the iodides in conjunction with bark; but, in my humble opinion, it is insufficient. I will even say more: I have observed at Lourcine, in 1878, several syphilitic women to whom iodide of potassium had been given immediately upon the appearance of the chancre; the secondary lesions presented themselves to an unusual amount. Was it a simple coincidence? I will not decide the question. At all events, one of our teachers, to whom I mentioned it the following year, stated that he had observed the same thing. This would open up an interesting field for investigation from a therapeutical point of view. We may, perhaps, some day have an opportunity of returning to this subject, which, in our historical study, we cannot consider in a manner which would prove satisfactory.

I have stated that the syphilitic virus, in the tertiary period, attacks the cellular (connective) tissue. The most common lesions, though late, are the masses, in the form of agglomerated tubercles, which are de-



posited in the connective tissue. They are *gummata*, so named on account of the gummy appearance of the products they contain at the period of their softening. These accidents show themselves at the end of eight, ten, fifteen, or twenty years; sometimes later, but rarely during the first few years of infection. At first they are hard tumors, *painful* to the touch, which soften, open, give exit to an ichorous liquid, similar to a solution of gum, and suppurating a little. When all this matter has escaped, cicatrization begins.

These *gummata* may occur in the brain, from which arise temporary paralyses, epileptiform attacks of an evanescent character, etc.; or, in the connective tissue of the glands, muscles, etc., from which arise various functional troubles whose description would make us lose sight of our objective point. Let us note, in passing, syphilitic *sarcocele*, characterized by fibrous bands which traverse the testicle, changing it in a short time into a hard, elongated form, characteristic in appearance, and rendering it unsuited for fecundation. *Sarcocele* is sometimes a transition lesion, but it is most often observed during the tertiary period.

I will merely mention the lesions of the muscles and tendons, infrequent accidents in syphilis, as well as *sarcocele*, I may add. We will now pass on to the lesions of the bones and periosteum, which are more important: yet we can only describe them hastily.

First, we have *ostitis*, that is to say, inflammation of the bone, attacking preferably the superficial bones. The same is true of *caries* and *necrosis*, results of *ostitis*; it is, above all, the bones of the face which are attacked.

There is also observed swelling of the periosteum, without any lesion of the bone, constituting *periostosis*.



When it forms a tumor between the bone and periosteum, the periostosis is called gummatous; sometimes it becomes phlegmonous, but most often it gives rise to a plastic effusion, which may be the point of origin of bony tumors, known as *exostoses*, and which will now occupy our attention.

Exostoses, generally late accidents, but rather frequent in tertiary syphilis, are of two kinds—partial exostoses or *true exostoses*, and generalized exostoses, or *hyperostoses*. Partial exostoses are tumors developed upon any part of a bone; hyperostoses consist of a swelling *en masse* of a portion of a bone,—a hypertrophy, in fact. The former have the appearance of tumors stuck upon a bone, or developed in its thickness, if it be a flat bone; while hyperostoses, which are most often seen on long bones, are exostoses in which the body of the bone itself forms the tumor; it is no longer a simple swelling; it is the entire bony mass doubled or trebled. These morbid products are the more interesting to us, as they will serve us soon to prove the existence of syphilis at a prehistoric era.

Exostoses frequently cause characteristic pains, called the *osteocopic pains*. The sites of predilection of these tumors are: the middle portion of the *tibia*, the bones of the *skull*, the *clavicle*, the *ulna*, the lower part of the *radius*, the extremities of the *fibula* and the *sternum*.

Exostoses are not always attended by osteocopic pains; the bony swelling is frequently the first symptom which attracts the patients' attention, for they believe themselves cured long since. Here is a very interesting example of untreated syphilis, having gone through its course, and manifesting itself by rather benign symptoms in the tertiary period.



CASE IV. (*Personal*).—A young woman, one of my patients, Mrs. N., came to my office in June, 1886. She was then thirty years old, and was a dressmaker,—an occupation she permanently retained after having had quite an exciting career.

“Doctor,” said she, “there has grown, within the past few days, a swelling on my right elbow; I do not feel any pain, but it worries me. What do you think it can be?”

Without immediately answering, I felt the wonderful tumor, which could be plainly perceived through the satin sleeve. At the other elbow there was an enlargement of the same kind, but less distinct, and which the patient had not yet noticed. Suspecting an old syphilis, I asked her if she had not felt analogous tumors in other places, more especially the legs.

“No; but if you wish to see——”

“Willingly.”

On each tibia, a little below the anterior tuberosity, was found a fine exostosis. I was certain. However, being desirous of having more light, I bluntly asked her this question:

“At what time did you have syphilis?”

Somewhat surprised, my patient hesitated a few moments; then, reflecting, like an intelligent woman, that a feint would be useless, if not harmful, she answered, plainly:

“Seven years ago.”

“Very good. And did you treat yourself?”

“Certainly. I followed a *thorough* course for three years; it is Doctor X. [I have forgotten the name of this illustrious unknown] who undertook my case.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Why yes, you must know him—a homœopathic physician.”

“Ah! Well, it will be necessary to begin treating you.”

“Commence?”

“Yes, madam; for seven years you have seen the successive symptoms of your syphilis, while eating sugar-pills; now you will have it treated with medicine.”

“Very well.”

I immediately prescribed mixed treatment, and had the satisfaction of learning from the patient herself, whom I frequently saw after this, that the exostoses had entirely disappeared in three months. Since that time she has been in the best of health; but it must be acknowledged that she follows treatment very conscientiously.

White syphilitic tumors have been described, but such things do not exist. There is here a mistake in



terms, and this is due to the fact that the majority have misunderstood the memoir of M. Richet<sup>1</sup> on white tumors. As de Fontaine<sup>2</sup> very aptly states, "At the time of the publication of M. Richet's memoir, the name white tumor was used in the sense of arthritis, or even of chronic joint disease, while to-day it is only applied to scrofulo-tuberculous joint diseases. M. Richet, to avoid coining a new word, described as a simple variety a condition which he would have been justified to create, or perhaps should have created, a new disease. To-day he certainly would not act in the same manner. The cause is understood. We find synovites, ostites, syphilitic joint troubles, but never white tumors outside of scrofula.

On the part of the nervous system we find, more particularly, paralyses and certain sensory troubles, to which we will merely allude. Then we arrive at the visceral lesions. Let us note syphilitic affections of the liver (pseudo-cirrhoses), of the urinary apparatus, and of the respiratory passages (gummata of the lung), of the thymus, of the spleen, etc. Those of our readers desirous of entering into details upon these subjects are referred to special works upon the subject. Finally, we will mention the *cachexia*, since the term has been adopted; but, as Follin<sup>3</sup> very justly remarks, it is "less a symptom of syphilis than a complication of this disease." This weakness, which is not peculiar to lues, is found in patients who have been forced to suffer physiological poverty and have a broken-down constitution, caused either by bad hygiene or by an improperly applied and

<sup>1</sup> Mémoires de l'Académie de Médecine. Paris, t. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Traité élément. de path. ext. Paris, 1874. Elementary Treatise on Pathological Anatomy.



badly understood mercurial treatment, and in all cases badly carried out.

Tertiary lesions may be precocious and appear during the early months of syphilitic infection, but this rarely occurs. Let us also note the tertiary ulcerations of the genitalia, which may pass for soft chancres; the touch-stone is the treatment by iodides. I saw a very fine example of this in 1881, at Lourcine, in *salle Astruc* (formerly St. Cléments). M. Gouguenheim, then my chief of service, had a wax cast taken, and this is still in the small museum of Lourcine. Last year (1889), I again had the opportunity of seeing an analogous case which led to an incorrect diagnosis.

CASE V. (*Personal*).—One of my patients, a young woman, Clémence M., by occupation a concert-hall singer, had me called, in October, 1888, to have my opinion in regard to a small erosion which existed at the point of intersection of the labia majora, at the base of the clitoris. This erosion was very superficial and painful, not at all indurated, and existed since three or four days. Was it ulcerated herpes? I was satisfied to order a white precipitate ointment, advising the patient to watch the lesion and return in case it got worse. In fact, it was expectant treatment.

I saw her a month later: she had purposely come from a sea-port on the Channel, where a physician, taking it for a soft chancre, had made numerous cauterizations. This interference, as energetic as it was uncalled for, had transformed the erosion into a deep ulcer, as large as a silver half-dollar and very painful. A liquid of a lemon-yellow and looking like mucilage was discharging: considerable œdema of the whole region existed. The patient, questioned upon this matter, assured me that she never had syphilis, which, at all events, excluded any idea of former treatment. However, she remembered having, five or six months previously, spots on the body,—what she thought was “eczema,” and to which she paid no attention.

I did not hesitate to prescribe iodide of potassium in large doses (3, then 4, grammes daily [45 to 60 grains]), and, for local treatment, I contented myself with starch poultices to relieve the tension of the œdematous tissues, followed by cocaine ointment, which removed the pain.

At the end of a week the ulcer was a third smaller; it was re-



duced one-half in a fortnight, and the œdema had disappeared. At the end of a month, healing was complete. At present she is taking a general treatment, convinced, and with reason, that she is syphilitic.

Let us state, in conclusion, that syphilis is acquired but once; the two or three cases of re-infection, reported by Follin, are too indefinite to admit of the matter without contesting it.

It is time to call a halt. Volumes could be written upon the manifestations of syphilis, and such is not my intention: the works of this character have already reached a number sufficient to constitute a chaos. Nevertheless, I have regarded it as indispensable to give a *résumé* of the leading symptoms which characterize syphilis. We show the thorns before the roses, so that the reader, if he has had the courage to read all of this sketch, will know, in the first place, that pox is a disease which must be treated; but that it is not, as certain patients imagine, a rotting away, which takes off an arm or a leg, or cripples one for life. Next, he will understand the terms which will recur upon every page of this historical study. He may even take interest in knowing the *entire* history of a virus which attacks all, young or old, learned or illiterate, smart or simple, innocent or guilty, *lascivious* or *prudish*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We have found this idea expressed by Barthélemy in his poem on syphilis:—

“Nulle digue qui puisse arreter ce torrent;  
Il saisit à la fois le docte et l'ignorant.  
Le riche en son hôtel, le pauvre en sa cabanc,  
L'impie et l'homme saint qu'abrite la soutane,  
Le vieillard, l'enfant même, atteint souvent d'un mal  
Dont il n'est pas lavé par le flot baptismal;  
Et peut-être aujourd'hui, parmi l'espèce humaine,  
Il n'est pas un seul homme, et dans l'homme une veine  
Où, quoique bien souvent, encore non révélé,  
Le virus destructeur ne soit inoculé.”



## CHAPTER II.

### ORIGIN OF THE WORD SYPHILIS.

“ Syphilidemque ab eo labem dixêre coloni.”—FRACASTOR.  
[The inhabitants of the country called it the disease of Syphilis.]

EVERY author who writes a work more or less connected with venereal diseases commences by giving some attention to the origin of the word *syphilis*. As to us, we will be very brief; for, to enter into many details as to the innumerable appellations which the *universal evil* received before a definite term was devoted to it would be to anticipate the most important chapter of our next publication. However, we may say, without further commentary, that this name was introduced by Fracastor in his Latin poem, which has deservedly remained a celebrated one.<sup>1</sup> The Italian physician, inspired by heroic epochs, places before us the divinities of Paganism, and supposes that a shepherd, whom he calls *Syphilus*, had addressed words offensive to Apollo, and had deserted his altars. The god, to punish him, sent him a disease of the genitals, “ which the inhabitants of the country called the *disease of Syphilus*.” From this incident, and from this *syphilis*, was derived :

“ Syphilidemque ab eo labem dixêre coloni.”

We will recur to the work of Fracastor when we study the authors of the sixteenth century.

But, from what source did Fracastor obtain this name? Opinions are divided. Let us immediately quote, to reject it completely, the opinion of Bosquillon, who proposes the orthography *siphilis*, which is inexact,

<sup>1</sup> Hieronymi Fracastorii : Syphilis, sive morbus gallicus. Veronæ, 1530. Jerome Fracastor : Syphilis, or the French Disease.



and derives this word from *σιφλός*, *reprehensible*, which is very vague. Others, like Swediaur,<sup>1</sup> seeing in this disease the result of bestial relations, find in it the two words *σῦς*, *hog*, and *φιλεῖν*, *to love*. Where has syphilis been seen to originate in the hog? As this theory is not mentioned by Fracastor, and as we must look not whence the name might come, but whence the physician of Verona obtained it, we will hold ourselves to the following explanation, which seems to us the simplest and most admissible. The word *syphilis* descends in a direct line (Rejes, Fallopius, Castel) from *σύν*, *with*, and *φιλία*, *love*, the companion of love; which means, in plain language, that the pox is a contagious disease, transmitted more especially by intimate relations. It is plain, then, that it is not necessary to incriminate the companion of St. Anthony; nor is it incumbent upon us to find out whether the poor devil who has had ill luck should be congratulated or despised. Every one is not so situated as to be able to have a harem guarded by eunuchs!

Before Fracastor, the current expression was *morbis gallicus*; it was also called the *Neapolitan disease*, the *disease of the Germans*, the *disease of the Poles*, of the *Spaniards*, of the *Turks*, etc; the *disease of the holy man Job*, of *St. Sementius*, of *St. Mevius*, of *St. Roch*, and others. All nations have received credit for it, as well as all the saints. But, of all these names, the one most generally employed in the sixteenth century was that of the *French disease*, or, rather, *morbis gallicus*, as that Latin was the scientific language of the times. There is no agreement in regard to the origin of this expression. Certain authors, starting out with the principle that pox also received the name of the *bad*

<sup>1</sup> F. Swediaur: *Practical Observations on Venereal Complaints*. Edinburgh, 1784.



*itch* (*mauvaise galle*), have seen in the word *gallicus* an adjective designating the kind of disease. Others have found a nationality in it,—*gallicus*, *Gaul*; otherwise, *French*. They base themselves upon the refutable fact that the French were the first ones contaminated at the siege of Naples. We will allude, later on, to this great discussion. The fact to remember, for the time being, is that the expression *morbus gallicus* was that currently used by authors in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as well in France as in all the rest of Europe. This is clearly brought out in a passage of Ulrich von Hutten,<sup>1</sup> where this author states that, if he has used the expression *French disease* in his book, it is solely to conform to a usage which has become prevalent; and “certes not,” adds he, “by reason of hatred against a celebrated nation, and one which is, perhaps, the most civilized and hospitable of our times; but because I would fear not to be sufficiently understood by every one if I employed another term to designate this disease.” We are happy to note this declaration from a foreigner, although it dates from the sixteenth century; and, coming from a German knight, it has still more value.

Later on, as a few points of resemblance (especially at the end of the variolous eruption) between the pustules of syphilis and those of variola (Latin *variola*), which was first called *varirole*, then *vérole*, were noted, the *morbus gallicus* became the *grosse vérole* (big pox), and, in order to avoid confusion, variola was given the name of *petite vérole* (small pox),—a name which it still retains. Syphilis has also been called *gorrhe*, *grand gorrhe*, etc.; each people gave it a special name. The enemy of the time being was employed as an appropriate sponsor. That is why the Turks called it the *Christian*

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*



disease; the Spaniards, the *disease of the Turks*; the Italians, the *French disease*; the French, the *Neapolitan disease*, etc. At last, the expression *lues venerea*, or simply *lues*, or *venereal disease*, or *venereal evil*, placed everybody in accord; then the word *pox* (*vérole*) prevailed, and was designated by a capital V,<sup>1</sup> or written out in full, in almost all the works of the eighteenth century treating of this matter. The term *syphilis*, forgotten since the poem of Fracastor, was adopted by the authors of the nineteenth century, and received the sanction of science. Our prudish epoch hides its face before the word *pox*. Our contemporaries mention it only in a whisper, seeming to find in it a flavor of obscenity. This false idea has regrettable consequences. "Syphilis," says Patton,<sup>2</sup> "receives a bad character from the prejudices which exist in the world; the idea which has made it considered as baneful, no matter what its origin, has especially tended to render it such. It is not the disease which is shameful, but the libertinage which gives birth to it." It is very plain that, the origin of syphilis being the same in all planes of society, syphilis may attack the "steady" man, who simply obeys physiological laws, as well as the vicious one, given over to all forms of debauchery. To classify the former as in the same category as the latter would be a crying shame and injustice, for chance alone, in this case, can be blamed. Let us bury that word *pox*, if you wish it, as it recalls a terrible hydra, terribly exaggerated; but let us, at least, print the word *syphilis*, for we have no other one with which to scientifically designate the *cosmopolitan evil*!

<sup>1</sup> We would say with a large P.

<sup>2</sup> De la Prostitution et de la Syphilis dans les grandes villes. Lyon, 1842. Prostitution and Syphilis in Large Cities.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE AGE OF SYPHILIS.

“Faire l’histoire de la syphilis, c’est pour anisi dire tracer celle de l’humanité.”—PHILIPPE ALBERT.<sup>1</sup>

“Je croirai avec Guy Patin que non seulement Job, David, Salomon, et Adam avoient la Vérole, mais qu’elle étoit dans le cahos avant la création.”—DE LA METTRIE.<sup>2</sup>

THE date of the birth of syphilis—here is a controverted question! Torrents of ink of *all virtues* have been spread, some wishing to prove that syphilis was born in 1494—these are the fierce ones; others, to establish that it existed in all antiquity—these latter comprising the minority. Between these well-defined theories are found intermediate opinions—the mean terms. Among the former, at least in the sixteenth century, how many ignoramuses copied each other! How many empirics! How many charlatans! And the reasons invoked! There is sufficient material for several volumes. This is what will be found condensed in a subsequent publication.

Nowadays, there is more and more of a tendency to declare America innocent; let us say right here that it took more than twenty years for the authors, who were more or less contemporaneous of the epidemic, to think of finding the origin in San Domingo. Christopher Columbus himself never suspected it; at all events, he

<sup>1</sup> To write the history of syphilis is, so to speak, to trace that of humanity. Mémoires sur les malad. vénér. Bordeaux, 1836. Memoir on Venereal Diseases.

<sup>2</sup> I am inclined to believe, with Guy Patin, that not only Job, David, Solomon, and Adam had the pox, but that it was in chaos before the creation. Saint Cosme vengé (St. Cosmos avenged), an anonymous work attributed to de la Mettrie by Barbier. Strasburg, 1744.



does not mention a word of it in his letters, even after several voyages; and it required an individual who was not very reliable—Fernandez y Oviédo—to accuse the natives of the Antilles, nearly *twenty-five years* after their discovery, to have this tale come to us. The best proof of the falsity of this assertion is in the multitude of names given to syphilis at the time of the great epidemic of the fifteenth century. If the disease, supposed to have been unknown up to that time, had really been brought from America, would it not have immediately received the name of the *American evil*, a name which it certainly would have retained? And Christopher Columbus would have gone to his eternal sleep without ever having suspected that the country discovered by him was the focus of a new virus! It would be very strange. However, we will give Oviédo his proper deserts later on.

The legend of the American origin of syphilis, still in great favor with the public, is actually no longer defended, except by a very small number of authors.<sup>1</sup> A few find another origin for it—Africa; others concede that it may have shown itself in the middle ages; but the majority attest its birth, for Europe, to Naples, during the siege of that city by Charles VIII, in the year 1494. The truth is, that syphilis is and was everywhere, but not as intense in all countries and at all times, and, above all, but little known, not to say unrecognized.

We have already said that we considered this disease as old as the world; now we are going to prove it. We propose to quote and elucidate the ancient texts already noted by our predecessors, who have endeavored to support the same theory. The arguments, good as well as

<sup>1</sup> In this connection the reader is referred to "A Study of Pre-Columbian Syphilis in America," by Jas. Nevins Hyde, A.M., M.D., in *Am. Jour. Med. Sci.*, August, 1891.



bad, will be analyzed. We will add others, and bring out other quotations which we have not found cited before anywhere. We will thus arrive, from age to age, to the epidemic of the fifteenth century, which will constitute the subject of our second volume, together with an analysis of the most interesting authors of the middle ages.

For instance, it is well understood that our first volume is entirely devoted to the proofs of the existence of syphilis from the creation of the world to the middle ages. Let those who doubt this ancient origin read *Nuei-King*, a medical treatise edited after the traditions and secular documents of China, by the Emperor *Hoang-ty*, who lived 2637 B.C. When they are sufficiently edified by this, I would recommend them to visit the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle and the Musée d'Anthropologie; they will see prehistoric human bones bearing the undeniable evidence of tertiary lesions. We will now guide the reader in these interesting researches.



## CHAPTER IV.

### SYPHILIS IN PREHISTORIC TIMES.

“La syphilis heréditaire déforme le crane d’une manière typique.”—J. PARROT.<sup>1</sup>

“Anjourd’hui l’anthropologie a donné son puissant appui aux partisans de l’origine ancienne en montrant sur des squelettes préhistoriques des traces indéniables d’altérations syphilitiques.”—P. HAMONIC.<sup>2</sup>

It is necessary, to begin with, to be agreed as to the significance of the word *prehistoric*. You may say it is very simple: *præ*, *before*; *historia*, *history*; that is, that which appertains to a period anterior to history. While this may be good enough, it is, nevertheless, useful to give more ample explanations; for a number of persons regard the word *prehistoric* as synonymous with *antediluvian*. This is too absolute; many peoples, in fact,—were it only the French, without going any further,—are ignorant of their history during the first three or four thousand years which followed what it has been agreed to call the deluge: this is the prehistoric period of Gaul. A nation, such as China, for example, had its history thirty-two centuries before Christ, and knew that one of its emperors, *Chinnong*, lived three thousand two hundred and sixteen years before our era; whilst all the other countries, with the possible exception of India, Chaldea, Egypt, and Judea, were yet, at

<sup>1</sup> Hereditary syphilis deforms the skull in a typical manner.

<sup>2</sup> To-day anthropology has given its weighty support to the partisans of the ancient origin by showing the undeniable traces of syphilitic alterations on prehistoric skeletons. *Des maladies vénériennes chez les Hébreux à l’époque biblique*. Paris, 1887. *On the Venereal Diseases Among the Hebrews in Biblical Times*.



that time, at their prehistoric period. Without going so far back, at the time of Hippocrates,—that is to say, in the fifth century before Christ,—history, among the Gauls, was limited to obscure legends or traditions, and there existed as yet no dynasty known or recognized among these bands of barbarians with their cannibalistic tendencies. The human bones half burnt, found in caves, leave no doubt in this respect.<sup>1</sup> From this it may be seen that it is impossible to stop at the same date to begin the period called prehistoric; since, at the same epoch, we find certain peoples cultivating the sciences, having treatises on medicine written through the means of the carefulness of their rulers, while others were still in the fullness of barbarism, not to say savagery. It is true that the former have remained stationary, and still travel in palanquins, while the latter get into the *express* and speak with their transoceanic friends by means of the telephone.

Astonishment may be expressed at seeing us give as our first proofs those drawn from anthropological discoveries. It is very plain that Chinese manuscripts, which date back more than forty centuries, are much anterior to certain Gaulish sepulchres in which have been found bones bearing pathological lesions. I will only cite as an example the skull of the cemetery of Brény (Aisne), which belongs to the Merovingian epoch. The contradiction is only apparent, however. As a matter of fact, the bones discovered in France, or in South America, might as well date from the deluge; and, as long as they do not date from an epoch in which the nation from which they are derived had a history, at home or among its neighbors, they are prehistoric.

<sup>1</sup> Conf. Le Baron : Lésions osseuses de l'homme préhistorique. Thèse de Paris, 1881. Osseous Lesions of Prehistoric Man.



It is for the purpose of disposing of the bones that we speak of the skull of the Frankish period, a historical epoch; we may then consider the written documents, and thus avoid repetition.

This being determined, let us desecrate the ancient sepulchres; let us draw from the clays, from the conglomerates containing bones, from the caves or Celtic dolmans, the remains of prehistoric man spared by the great cataclysm! Let us evoke the spirits of these first representatives of our species, from whom five or six thousand years separate us; then, perhaps, their skeletons, ranged in the cases of our museums, lifting up their skulls studded with osteophytes, and brandishing their tibiæ swelled with exostoses, will cry to their descendants of the nineteenth century: "Yes, we escaped the universal deluge; we are those human beings you dominate prehistoric, and whose flight upon the elevated ridges of the continents of those times inspired the symbolic ark of Noah. The race of the mammoth is forever lost: it sleeps in the midst of the polar ices which have served as its winding sheet. The mastodon and the *dinotherium giganteum* repose between the layers and strata of the tertiary period; they are lost in sands or locked up in the centre of the rocks which were their tombs; the species is extinct! We, your ancestors, we have survived where these colossi perished; and we had syphilis. Know then that it is with it that our race has traversed the centuries!"

It was the heritage of the antediluvian man: that one has come to us intact.

My colleague and friend, P. Hamonic, in a very interesting monograph, of which we will speak later on, thus sums up his opinion on the proofs, I would almost denominate *fossil*, of syphilis: "At this day anthropology



has lent its powerful support to the partisans of the ancient origin by demonstrating upon prehistoric skeletons the undeniable traces of syphilitic alterations. This is an irrefutable demonstration. It is true that the nature of the lesions found in the majority of specimens may be discussed. A few, however, are so typical that it is *impossible* not to admit them."

With prehistoric syphilis is connected the name of J. Parrot, the late lamented Professor of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris. He was the first who dared demonstrate that venereal disease existed in the Stone Age. Born in the immense caves or in the shade of the pines and of the gigantic trees, syphilis now rules, the world over, after having passed through royal alcoves.

Without permitting himself to be daunted by the incredulous smiles of some, or the lively sallies of others, Parrot maintained his position before and against all, and, thanks to him, prehistoric syphilis has left no doubts except in the minds of the intractable. It is really painful to see the convictions of thirty or forty years overthrown by material proofs which are not as easy to refute as more or less obscure tests. Few minds, even of a superior order, consent to burn their idols, and, for want of arguments, they quibble, but do not surrender. We will pass on.

We will first consider the discovery of Solutr , which has excited anthropologists so much. Solutr  is a locality in the department of Sa ne-et-Loire; we find here a prehistoric site. In the different excavations made since 1867 have been found the bones of reindeer and of horses, cut flints and remains belonging to the Gallo-Roman and Merovingian epochs. The human *d bris* of Solutr  appear to belong to a race coming from Asia. In 1872, the Abb  Ducrost, having under-



taken some excavations, found a female skeleton lying in a direction from east to west, and surrounded by defaced stones; these remains, according to the opinion of anthropologists of the best authority (Broca, Parrot, and others), could be referred to the Stone Age, the period of the reindeer and of primitive man. The two tibiæ of this woman, according to the scientific reports, are the seat of *exostoses* manifestly *syphilitic*. The right one, especially, shows three elevations which are particularly characteristic. One is situated at the middle part, on the crest of the bone, from which it extends half-way to the internal and half-way to the external surface. Below, at a distance of two centimetres, a similar one exists, situated upon the crest of the tibia and upon the free border which forms its continuation; it also extends to the internal and external surface of the bone. Finally, a third exostosis is located upon the internal surface of the upper third of the bone. Examined by Broca, Ollier, Parrot, and Virchow, these exostoses were, by common consent, pronounced syphilitic.<sup>1</sup> M. Rollet, who upon several occasions examined these valuable relics, remains convinced that the exostoses of the skeleton of Solutré are to be considered as "more certain indications of syphilis than the cranial deformities" described by Parrot, and with which we will occupy our attention.

Professor Parrot gave his first lectures on prehistoric syphilis, at l'Hôpital des Enfants-Assistés, in 1877. It was upon an occasion when a few skulls of children, upon which lesions existed, were presented before the Société d'Anthropologie, that Parrot asserted that they were due

<sup>1</sup> We have derived this information from the *Bulletin de la Société d'anthropologie*, the *Dictionnaire de médecine et de chirurgie pratiques*, the *Traité des maladies vénériennes* (Treatise on Venereal Diseases) of M. Jullien, and the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales*.



to hereditary syphilis. His opinion was shared in by Broca, whose high authority in anthropological matters no one could deny, as well as by other savants whom we will have occasion to quote. Parrot repeated what he said at the Enfants-Assistés to the Havre Congress and to the Anthropological Society the same year; and it is from the report of the meeting of the congress that we cull what follows.<sup>1</sup>

The Professor begins by describing, from his daily observations in his service at the Enfants-Assistés, the lesions produced on the skulls of infants by hereditary syphilis. As we are not giving lectures on syphilography, we cannot go into details. The important fact to remember is that, as a result of syphilis in the parents, the children present, especially at the superciliary ridges, thick and *persisting osteophytes*. These bony productions, due to the syphilitic process, are characteristic, and cannot be confounded with any other lesion. If the presence of these persistent lesions is noted upon the skulls of children found in the diluvian or other formations, they certainly cannot be attributed to whooping-cough. We will now let the Professor speak:—

The Anthropological Institute possesses five Peruvian skulls of children; three are from Arica, and were sent by Dr. Bourrut; the other two were donated by M. Destruges. With the exception of one of the former, they are all pathological, and show the *undeniable traces of hereditary syphilis*.

It may be immediately objected that, Peru being in America, no one ever thought of denying the ancient existence of syphilis on the new continent. I will answer that, first, I am writing the history of syphilis from the traces it has left, and it has left them every-

<sup>1</sup> J. Parrot: les Déformations craniennes causées par la syphilis héréditaire (in Associat. franç. pour l'avancem. des Scienc. Congrès du Havre, 1877). The Cranial Deformities Caused by Hereditary Syphilis.



where, without distinction as to country; and, furthermore, that if patience be taken to read this entire chapter, there will be found, further on, identical descriptions of European bones, which may be compared with the descriptions that precede them. In 1887 there existed four syphilitic skulls in the Musée Broca. As we might be accused of making too vague or incomplete a quotation, we will give the proceedings *in extenso* :—

This is, in a few words, what is observed : In *No. 5, Case XI*, from a child which had six teeth, the fontanelle is large and the orbital arches are covered by a thick and porous *osteophyte*. Within, the bregmatic region of the frontal and the cavities of the parietals present a thin layer of a very porous morbid tissue, full of vascular furrows.

In *No. 6 of the same case*, the fontanelle is somewhat smaller than in the preceding, and presents externally, upon the frontal and upon the parietals, around the bregma, *four ossified ridges*, of oval form, with numerous porosities and furrows directed from in front backward. The glabella is covered by a similar plaque. Some portions of the internal surface are involved, even to a feeble degree, and at points which do not correspond to the external lesions. One of the skulls of M. Destruges, whose fontanelle is largely open, has at its periphery, in the bregmatic angle of each frontal, an *osteophyte* of circular form, 40 millimetres in diameter by 3 in thickness, porous and traversed by numerous furrows. There exists another, more extensive and presenting the same structure in a marked degree, on the left parietal, near the lambdoid suture.

The last, very incomplete, is *altered*, the same as the preceding, at the *orbital arches*.

All these skulls are of an undoubted antiquity. . . .

A study of these skulls of children teaches us two things : (1) that syphilis existed in Peru before the Spaniards discovered America; (2) that this disease was frequent there, since the greater number of the skulls of children which come from there bear traces of it. . . .

Thanks to the kindness of Professor de Quatrefages, and with the assistance of Dr. Ern. Hamey, I have discovered in the collection of the muséum *two skulls*, no less ancient than those of M. Destruges, *which present the typical lesions of hereditary syphilis*.

One of the two, donated by M. Ducroy, is that of an adult Peruvian of Arica. It bears no trace of artificial deformity, is slightly natiform, and an epactal bone 55 millimetres in height is visible. Along



the sagittal suture, for a length of 70 millimetres, the parietals are symmetrically covered with a *porous layer*, having numerous deep *vascular furrows*. The frontal has the same lesions as are found in the neighborhood of the bregma. The alteration is much more marked on the right one, and extends to the fronto-parietal suture of that side, where a rather extensive *synostosis* is apparent.

The other skull is of a more striking form, the *characteristic lesions being very marked*. It is catalogued as No. 9 of the Champeaux collection (muséum). The teeth of the upper jaw are worn. It is very brachycephalous, and there can be seen a double epactal bone, surrounded by a few Wormian bones. The coronal and sagittal sutures are completely obliterated. It is natiform to a marked degree, and presents, in addition, *two bosses* on the frontal. The *prominences of the parietals*, exceedingly prominent, are separated by a deep furrow. They are *porous and furrowed* by irregular *vessels*. Those of the frontals, much less marked, are pyriform, while that which is slender terminates at the glabella. The bregmatic region is a sort of a quadrangular space, prominent more especially at its centre.

The thickening of the skull-walls in the diseased portions is considerable. At one point of the parietals it is 38 millimetres thick, and at the temporals 27, while that of the unaltered portions does not exceed 10 millimetres. This enormous thickening of a rather extensive portion of the skull accounts for its excessive weight, which amounts to 1340 grammes, while the average weight of the skulls of the same derivation, which are unaltered, does not exceed 800 grammes.

Here it may be necessary to make an observation, as American skulls are under consideration. The syphilitic deformity recalls the well-known one of the trilobe skulls of Ancona. But the resemblance between them is only apparent, while there are profound differences. I will content myself in mentioning the principal one, which consists in the absence of porous and furrowed osteophytes on the skulls of Ancona.<sup>1</sup> . . .

The *éxposé* which I have just given may be summed up as follows :

1. *Hereditary syphilis* deforms the skull in a *typical* manner.
2. Syphilis existed in Peru before the Spanish Conquest.

At the same meeting, M. de Quatrefages quoted the work of M. Jourdanet, reciting the history of syphilis in Mexico before the Conquest, and recalled the opinion

<sup>1</sup> We ask the indulgence of our readers for giving these rather abstruse descriptions, but they are indispensable for a proper understanding of the rest of this long chapter.



of Captain Cook on the pre-existence of this disease in Oceanica,—an opinion confirmed by different authors. M. Bertillon said that another work, emanating from a Spanish monk and translated by M. Jourdanet, also admits that among the number of diseases to which the Mexicans were subject is found syphilis. Finally, M. Broca concluded with these words: “I take the opportunity of making a note of the proofs which have been given of the existence of syphilis in the New World before the advent of the Europeans. There is nothing astonishing, taking everything into consideration, that the same diseases should attack the majority of humanity; what is important to note is, that the appearance of syphilis in the human race is much anterior to the Middle Ages.”

All that precedes refers solely to America, but forms a part of the entirety of the documents which prove that syphilis existed everywhere, at all times, and these bony lesions serve as types for the study of the skulls discovered in Africa and in Europe.

As we have already said, Parrot had occasion, at a previous meeting of the Société d'Anthropologie, of speaking on prehistoric syphilis. It was concerning the skull of a young Indian of Pernambuco, which M. Thulié presented. This skull presented the typical lesions of hereditary syphilis. We give the proceedings of that meeting,<sup>1</sup> which took place in July preceding the Havre Congress:—

M. Parrot called attention to the fact that hereditary cranial syphilis takes on two distinct modes of evolution. It proceeds either by erosion, which is not the case in the present instance, or by hyperostosis. Osteophytes then develop, which choose as their sites of election the orbit, the frontal, and the parietal bones, and have the double effect of increasing the thickness of the central wall of the bone and

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin de la Société d'anthropologie, 1877.



of inducing a deformity of the vault of the skull. He submitted a number of specimens of these lesions to the society, derived from subjects in whom *the diagnosis had been confirmed by a knowledge of the pathological state of the parents.* . . .

It appears demonstrated that syphilis existed in Peru before the Conquest. The museum possesses several Peruvian skulls bearing lesions of an osteophytic character, which are unequivocal. Upon one of them, as in the skull described by M. Thulié, the lesion has the orbit for its site. *The identity of site confirms the identity of diagnosis*, and at the same time the opinion that syphilis, in Peru, preceded the arrival of Europeans.

"This conclusion," says M. Broca, "is a very important one, and I feel very much inclined to accept it, without admitting, on that account, that the syphilis of Europe is of American origin; for that disease may, like many others, have taken its origin at several points on our globe. The existence of syphilis in Europe before the discovery of America is, if not absolutely demonstrated, at least rendered very probable by a large number of documents."

In 1880 the Musée d'Anthropologie was enriched by a new specimen, proving the existence of syphilis at a prehistoric epoch. This was the fragment of a skull belonging to a race which had disappeared before the fifteenth century, and it would be a difficult matter to say exactly at what epoch the man lived from whom this bony fragment was derived. We will give a short *résumé* of the meeting at which it was examined<sup>1</sup>:—

*Meeting of July 1st.*—M. Moreno presented two skulls from the old burial grounds of the Rio Negro; they are representatives of races anterior to the Spanish Conquest and extinct before it. The one<sup>2</sup> which presents pathological characteristics was at a depth of about four metres, in a sandy, argillaceous layer similar to the quaternary loam of the pampas. Not far from there, in the same stratum, were a few fragments of the carapace of a glyptodon. The other skull is more modern, although quite ancient. It was at a depth of two metres, in dunes which are to-day solidified. It is deformed after the manner of the Aymaras.

M. Moreno called attention to the fact, in connection with the subject, that his discoveries were related to several forms of skulls con-

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin de la Société d'anthropologie, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> A calvarium.



nected with different races. The oldest, represented by the calvarium, should have existed in the glacial periods of Patagonia, which are known to be later than the glacial epoch of Europe. . . .

M. Bordier called attention to the *lesion, undoubtedly syphilitic*, of one of the skulls presented by M. Moreno. . . .

M. Bertillon drew attention to the fact that the second skull presented the marked remains of an ostitis of long duration, "and," added he, "*I only see syphilis as the cause which could have produced it.*"

M. Broca concurred in this opinion. "The ostitis," said he, "appears to be neither tuberculous nor traumatic; *tertiary syphilis alone could have produced it.* This specimen is still more demonstrative than the skulls of the Peruvian children, upon which were demonstrated lesions attributable to the same cause."

This proves more than sufficiently that syphilis existed in Peru and in Patagonia at a time when the Europeans still ignored the use of iron. We will now investigate the skeletons of the wandering tribes of a cannibal nature who peopled the Gauls in the Stone Age, and in druidical times before the Frankish dynasties. Syphilis, as we shall see, reigned supreme, and spared no more the tibias of the Celts than it did the skulls of the Peruvians whom an ocean separated from them. We have found, in a very interesting thesis, some valuable information<sup>1</sup>: we will examine the different descriptions given by the author. But all are not searching, to the same degree, for the cause we are defending: so that, after quoting the text and giving the explanations necessary to facilitate their understanding, we will limit ourselves to stating the ideas set forth. The reader may draw his own conclusions.

In Chap. II, Sec. 1, these descriptions, of some interest, are found:—

No. 65. Fragment of the frontal bone from a tumulus of Me-loissy (Côte-d'Or). Musée Broca, Case XXIII.

The lower surface of this bone has *two exostoses* to the left of the corneal crest. The one measures 1 centimetre in length, 6 millimetres

<sup>1</sup> Le Baron : Thèse de Paris, 1881.



in breadth, and 3 millimetres in thickness. The other is 8 millimetres long, 5 wide, and 2 thick. To the right of the same crest there is a third exostosis somewhat smaller. The surface of all of these bony growths is irregular. . . .

Was the subject under the influence of a scrofulous or *syphilitic* diathesis?

We will simply observe that these exostoses correspond to the superciliary arches, and Parrot has shown us that this was the site of election of osteophytes in hereditary syphilis.

No. 66. Skull from Grottos of Bray-sur-Seine (Seine-et-Marne). Musée Broca.

This was presented to the Société d'Anthropologie, in 1881, by Professor Parrot, who expressed the hypothesis of syphilis, but did not venture to sustain it.

It presents, as a matter of fact, nothing but simple depressions. Le Baron sees in this lesions due to atrophy, which seems quite probable to us; and we have mentioned this skull merely for the sake of the truth, in view of the hypothesis advanced by Parrot. The third description furnishes material for controversy.

No. 85. Skull of Liby (Ardèche). Musée Broca, No. 3.

Upon a few teeth of this skull, there exists a remarkable lesion, misinterpreted a few years ago, and with which Drs. Parrot and Magitot have been particularly occupied,—I mean the dental erosion. It is characterized by *transverse striations*, which are single or multiple and correspond each one to an arrest of development. M. Parrot attributes these furrows to *syphilis*, and M. Magitot sees in them the indelible traces of convulsions which have occurred in childhood. Upon which side is the truth?

Without wishing to contradict M. Magitot, we will say that we have observed, upon many occasions, the transverse striations upon the teeth of children whose parents were syphilitic, notably at Lille, and at the dispensary of the Société Philanthropique, at La Villette. This does not mean, however, that convulsions may not sometimes bring about an identical result, but perhaps



not as characteristic. Let us concede to M. Magitot that one should not indistinctly trace syphilis in every prehistoric tooth that bears transverse furrows, but let that skillful practitioner permit us to partake of the opinion of Parrot in the majority of cases.<sup>1</sup>

Le Baron quotes, in addition, a large number of cases of exostoses, but without giving any description nor explaining their origin. In section two, he describes a specimen which, for him, is a typical syphilitic hyperostosis:—

No. 89. Fragment of the right tibia, from the dolmen of Léry (Eure). Muséum.

Near the middle of the crest of this tibia there exists a *considerable hyperostosis* of the anterior half of the diaphysis. As a result the anterior border presents a very marked curve, with an anterior convexity. This hypertrophy has an elongated, ovoid form, and its surface is as smooth as the rest of the bone. It extends to a length of 85 millimetres. In this locality, the tibia is 24 millimetres thick. A longitudinal section, made through the tumor, shows that it is composed of compact tissue. The medullary canal has preserved its normal dimensions.

Should this hypertrophy be attributed to a varicose or other ulcer? I think not, on account of the polished surface of the tumor. I prefer seeing in it a *syphilitic* alteration of the bone. Besides, it is one of the localities where syphilis preferably evidences its ravages.

We do not see anything to add to these conclusions.

No. 90. Tibia of the dolmen of Maintenon (Eure-et-Loire). Musée Broca.

This bone has multiple lesions in all its length. Near the centre of the crest of the tibia there is a *nummular exostosis* about 3 centimetres in diameter and 7 to 8 millimetres thick at its middle portion. The surface, almost smooth, is riddled with a multitude of small holes. Within and below, it is detached from the rest of the bone, and at that point forms a sharp border, which is free. Without and downward, on the contrary, it merges into the rest of the diaphysis. . . .

<sup>1</sup> See further on an article by Parrot concerning the lesions produced in the teeth by hereditary syphilis.



The internal border, at its upper half, is studded with *numerous* regular *exostoses* several centimetres in height. . . .

Finally, *multiple* and irregular *exostoses* are seen at the inferior peroneo-tibial articulation. . . .

In order to determine the nature of this lesion, I thought that I could not do better than compare it with the diseased tibias of the Musée Dupuytren. There I found, in No. 415, an identical specimen, bearing the diagnosis of *hyperostosis*. M. Houël, in his catalogue, adds that there probably existed an ulcer at the site of the tumor, which is observed upon the crest of the bone.

To this cause was there not probably superadded some serofulous element,—I dare not say *syphilitic*?

Perhaps both were united; the hyperostosis may have been produced under an ulcerated gumma; this hypothesis is probable, on account of the smooth appearance of the bony tumor.

The author terminates his work with the following observations:—

Syphilis, relatively rare in ancient times, has become a common disease since steam has rendered the mingling of people so easy. Many tribes of Oceanica, still exempt from this disease at the beginning of this century, are to-day the subjects of pox. . . .

Do the eight teeth which I found marked with erosions prove that he (the primitive man) had syphilis? M. Parrot would answer affirmatively. M. Magitot, on the contrary, would conclude that they had convulsions.

I have found no other proof of prehistoric syphilis than the hyperostosis of the tibia of Léry. If it be well proven that this tibia is syphilitic, *and such is my opinion*, prehistoric syphilis is no more a matter of doubt. But it must be confessed that it is rare.

Le Baron, while thoroughly convinced, does not dare advance too much. Let us not forget that the author was sustaining his thesis for the doctorate, and contemporaneous history has shown us that to advance opinions which might not be shared in by a majority of the judges is not always unattended with danger.

Let us now give a final extract from the proceedings of the Société d'Anthropologie:—



*Meeting of Nov. 18, 1880.*—M. de Mortillet presented a skull and a jaw-bone obtained from the cemetery of Brény (Aisne). The skull, taken from a Merovingian sepulchre, presents all the characteristics of the Frank race. The jaw is that of a child, all of the teeth being crossed by *horizontal furrows*. There is present a sort of arrest of development, an erosion which M. Magitot believes is due to some convulsive disease, but which M. Parrot regards as a mark of *infantile syphilis*.<sup>1</sup>

We have already expressed our opinion upon these lesions of infantile syphilis, which M. Magitot refuses to admit for prehistoric times. For us, this proof, like others of a similar nature, has no real value, except as confirming or adding force to the first ones which we gave, and which seem to us irrefutable.

Such were the materials of anthropological origin which we were able to obtain at the beginning of our researches. But, in running over French and foreign medical journals which have appeared for the past thirty years, we found, among other valuable articles, one by Parrot, published in the *Revue Scientifique*, in 1882. It had for title, "Une Maladie préhistorique,"<sup>2</sup> and in it the author adduces new facts in favor of the theory he sustains. We will analyze this lecture of the Professor by letting him speak as much as possible. Parrot thus begins:—

Quite recently, Professor Rollet, of the Faculty of Medicine of Lyons, published, in the *Annales de Dermatologie*, two articles upon the ancient foci of syphilis, in which may be found a choice erudition, and an argument full of method and of proof. This study commands attention, and disposes one to the views of the author.

He thinks that this disease is very ancient in humanity; that India, from the documentary evidence found in the Vedas, is one of

<sup>1</sup> Later on will be found, in an article by Parrot, which we will analyze, a detailed description of the teeth of this jaw of the Frank epoch.

<sup>2</sup> "A Prehistoric Disease." This article of the *Revue Scientifique* is reproduced in its entirety in the works of Parrot, published under the care of Dr. Troisier, in 1886.



the most ancient foci ; that China, as has been proven by Commander Dabry, has known it from time immemorial ; that the *yaws* of Africa is identical with syphilis, but that nothing demonstrates that the latter was not carried by the Mohammedans and Jews whom Ferdinand and Isabella drove out of Spain ; that it existed in America before the arrival of the Europeans, as related by Oviedo ; that the companions of Christopher Columbus introduced it. . . .

Europe alone, according to M. Rollet, did not know syphilis before the end of the fifteenth century, no written document mentioning its existence. And he adds that the excavations made in alluvial soils and in old burial grounds, while they have brought to light many skulls which go back to prehistoric times,—that is, to the most remote periods of our history,—do not demonstrate upon any of them the characteristic lesions of syphilis. The female skeleton found at Solutie shows upon the tibias, and especially upon the right one, *syphilitic exostoses* (Broca, Ollier, Parrot, Virchow) ; but the Abbé Ducrost, to whom this discovery is due, raises doubts as to the epoch to which this sepulchre should be referred.

I here put myself down as opposed to this last portion of the thesis sustained by my learned colleague of Lyons, for I am convinced that syphilis manifested itself, long before the discovery of America, at several points of that part of Europe which to-day constitutes France.

Letting aside the texts, with the interpretations and commentaries which have been made, I will merely produce, to support my view, *material, visible, tangible proofs* ; specimens analogous to, and even identical with, those which pathological anatomy permits us to gather every day.

The author next considers the pathological anatomy of hereditary syphilis :—

The bones and the teeth are the only parts of the organism which, in certain conditions, resist destruction, and which, at times, from a morphological point of view, remain for several centuries in the state in which death surprised them. And for this reason, when the pathology of remote periods is studied, it is only from their examination that data of any real value can be derived.

I made this inquiry in regard to syphilis, and it has furnished me with valuable memoranda ; but, before making them known, and to show their great importance, I will describe briefly the bone and dental lesions of hereditary syphilis, such as pathological anatomy has taught us, leaving aside all those which might not prove useful to my end.



Remains of skulls being the only bone specimens which I have had an opportunity of examining, I must limit myself, in the study of lesions, to this part of the skeleton. They appear under two aspects, widely different and even opposite. Some consist in a normal loss of substance, sometimes worn to perforation; while others are like small tubercles, which thicken, to a considerable extent, certain portions of the parietes.

These two pathological conditions are generally found in the same skull, but not in the same region. The first one was described in 1843, by Elsässer, under the name of *cranio-tabes*. It is on the internal face of the calvarium that it begins and that its different degrees may be noted. It only appears externally at its last period. At first depressions are seen, a sort of cup-shaped excavations, excavated in the walls of the skull, which is rugous at their site, thinned to a great extent, and even perforated.

I have shown that there are two varieties of *cranio-tabes*, having each one a distinct site and etiology. The one almost always symmetrical affects the frontal and parietal bones around the bregma and along the sagittal suture. It is developed during intra-uterine life, by means of a perversion of nutrition, as is proven by the weakly condition of children affected by it. I have qualified it by the epithet *congenital peribregmatic*. The other occupies, without exception, the portions which slope downward in the dorsal decubitus; that is to say, the parietal bones, behind the occipital, at the cerebral and cerebellar fossæ. It is always produced after birth, recognizes hereditary syphilis as a cause, and belongs to the rachitic period. Skulls involved in this manner lose in specific gravity; they are porous, fragile, and look as if they would crumble at the slightest touch.

The cranial alterations of the second variety, instead of being atrophic and destructive, appear, on the contrary, as exuberant vegetations upon the most elevated portions of the calvarium, and externally. They are flattened, circular elevations, sharply defined from the healthy portions by their elevation, porosity, and, in the fresh state, by their red or violaceous color. Primarily but little spread, they sometimes invade the larger portion of the external table. The walls are here notably thickened, and may be 10, 15, 20, and even 40 millimetres thick. Their tissue consists of large, vasculo-medullary spaces, limited by bony trabeculæ, perpendicular to the cranial surface. At first spongy, elastic, and soaked with a large quantity of liquids, it ends by acquiring considerable hardness. Very frequently the skulls affected with osteophytes present a typical deformity, which I have qualified as *natiform*.



So much for the bones ; let us now see what the indelible traces are which hereditary syphilis leaves upon the teeth :—

Upon the teeth, the imprints of hereditary syphilis are *tenacious* and *characteristic*. They often preserve their original appearance, not only during the life of the individual, but after death, *during long centuries*.

According to Parrot, these impressions affect both dentitions and follow physiological development in a regular manner. It is an atrophy, of which he recognizes five varieties. The first, the beginning of the others, consists in small, rounded depressions around the crown; he calls it *cupuliform*. The second, which is derived from the first, is represented by a furrow, due to the approximation of the cup-shaped depressions; this has the name of *sulciform*. The third, *cuspidian atrophy*, has its site of preference in the canines and premolars; the crown appears to be divided into two unequal parts. The free portion seems to be driven in like a peg into that which is nearer the gum, and apparently healthy. The *hatchet* atrophy is seen in the four upper incisors only, during the first dentition; it is a consecutive caries. In the form described by Hutchinson there exists, upon the cutting edges of the incisors, a notch of variable depth, triangular or crescent-shaped.

Such is a rapid sketch of the bone and dental lesions caused by hereditary syphilis. “*No other disease,*” says Parrot, “*can produce them*; so much so that their very existence justifies us in affirming that the subject we observe affected with such remains was a syphilitic.”

The author then goes on to speak of two skulls at the Anthropological Institute, donated by M. Destruges, and which come from Guyaquil (Ecuador). They are the skulls of two children, a description of which by Parrot, at the Congress at Havre in 1877, has been



given, as also of that which follows it, of which we will recall the principal lesions, and add new details. This third skull is at the museum (No. 9 of the Collection Champeaux); it was found near Lima, in the valleys of Chancai. It is an adult skull, natiform to a marked degree, and having *four* peribregmatic *osteophytes*. At a few diseased points its walls are 38 millimetres thick, and it weighs 1340 grammes, instead of 800, the average weight of unaltered skulls of the same origin. The objects found in connection with the bones (vases, jewelry, cloths) in no wise point to the Spanish occupation. Syphilis, then, existed in Peru and in Ecuador before the advent of the Spaniards,—a fact which no one doubts. In order to show its presence in Europe before the return of Columbus, Parrot also relies upon anatomical specimens.

He first describes the lower jaw of a young Frank of the Merovingian epoch, found in the cemetery of Brény, whose discovery we have already mentioned. Of the fourteen teeth in this jaw, eight are affected,—the four incisors, the two canines, and the two premolars; the others are intact, as is always observed, since their evolution only takes place after the period of activity of hereditary syphilis. It is the *sulciform atrophy* which predominates: two clearly-defined horizontal furrows are to be seen. *Hereditary syphilis alone* can produce such lesions; hence, it existed in France at an undetermined period, “but certainly *before the seventh century.*”

These times are still within the domain of history. Let us look at prehistoric times. Parrot bases himself upon the fragments of skulls of children and a few teeth found by Dr. Prunières, of Marvejols, in the dolmens and caverns of Lozère:—



One of these fragments comes from the dolmen of Cauquenos. It is a portion of the right half of the occipital bone. Its length is 47 millimetres and its width 36. There exist two perforations identical with those produced by syphilitic cranio tabes, 3 millimetres in diameter and corresponding to the occipital fossæ. Around them the internal table is slightly porous, as is usually found in rachitics.

A second specimen, much more significant, is the remains of the posterior half of the parietal bone of a child; it comes from an excavation made in a dolmen of Boujassac. Upon one of its borders are seen numerous serrations, corresponding to the sagittal suture. It is 74 millimetres long and 53 wide. Its internal surface is perfectly smooth. Externally may be seen a pathological layer, having irregular contours, from 3 to 5 centimetres in diameter and 2 to 3 millimetres thick. There are numerous openings and canaliculi, slightly oblique in reference to the surface of the bone. All these peculiar features can leave no doubt as to the *syphilitic* origin of this osteophyte.

Another fragment, more curious than the preceding, on account of the clearness of its characteristics, is that of a child's parietal bone, found, like those of which I have been speaking, in a dolmen of Lozère. Of a length of 55 millimetres and 44 wide, of an irregular triangular shape, its internal surface is normal; over almost the entire extent of the external table there exists a hard, porous, morbid layer, identical with the osteophytes, which are generally found on the skulls of children affected with hereditary syphilis. At those points where it is in a state of preservation the border is rounded off, and contrasts sharply with the sound parts. Its thickness varies from 2 to 3 millimetres. The small openings which cover its surface are pretty regularly distributed. It is formed of trabeculæ, which are perpendicular or slightly oblique to the surface of the parietal bone. This lesion, really specific when it is attentively studied, leaves no more doubt as to its *syphilitic nature* than those of the skulls of Chancai and Guyaquil.

In addition, there have been found, in the sepulchres of which we have just been speaking, teeth affected with syphilitic lesions. Parrot adds that he has found *sulci-form atrophy* in the teeth that M. Magitot had sent him. The latter, as we have already said, attributed these lesions of the teeth to convulsions of childhood; but, remarks Parrot, this way of viewing the matter is losing each day "the credit it owed to the talent and to the legitimate force of its author."



Those who have studied pathological anatomy will appreciate all the importance of these proofs brought forward "to support the high antiquity of syphilis," as Parrot says. Since the epoch of the dolmens, there have not been produced in the human organism such changes that we cannot regard as identical the bony lesions of those times with those of to-day. These same lesions, in our modern skeletons, being due to hereditary syphilis alone, we are forced to conclude that the bony remains, almost fossil, which we have just examined, belonged to human beings whose parents were syphilitic.

"How much these proofs are superior in certainty," says Parrot, "to those derived from written documents! To simple presumptions, to discussions of texts, to the interpretation of terms, to assertions, to the accounts of authors, I oppose the fact itself, the disease in action. It is the *delictum flagrans* which forces conviction with its irresistible power. Syphilis existed, then, in Europe at times which preceded history; and if, as everything would lead us to suppose, it existed equally in other parts of the world, we are justified in considering it as one of the most ancient, and, perhaps, as *the most ancient* disease of man."

The question which arises is, if it has not exercised some influence upon the genesis of other diseases. This is, perhaps, going too far; syphilis of itself is already sufficiently complex, and has manifestations sufficiently numerous to dispense with the accusation that it is the parent of every virus. Let us attest that it existed in quarternary man; but let us not make it the reservoir of all the microbes, on that account.

In conclusion, let us reproach Parrot with one false theory: there is no man so great but may commit an error. According to him, all the bony deformities which we know as rachitic have for their origin hereditary syphilis; and, what is more grave, he goes so far as to write that rickets, in children, is solely due to the



syphilis of their parents. Now, we daily see improper alimentation bring on rickets; very few children who are young can resist the food termed strengthening, consisting of bouillons, soups, eggs, meat, etc.; those that do not die of gastro-enteritis become rickety—all, or very nearly all. I do not hesitate to affirm that bouillon alone kills ten times as many newborn infants as syphilis, whose murderous reputation has been exaggerated. We cannot dilate to any greater length, not having rickets to describe here. Nevertheless, with the exception of this inexact opinion of the Professor, the lectures of Parrot on the bones of quarternary man are none the less in conformity with scientific observation; and his conclusions concerning prehistoric syphilis have received the approval of such men as Broca, Ollier, Rollet himself, Virchow, and others, whose authority and competence are universally recognized.

How much osteology! the unfortunate reader who is a stranger to the medical art, and consequently unfamiliar with these gruesome investigations, will say. Let us definitely leave the museums, those catacombs of science, and explore secular literature.



## CHAPTER V.

### TCHOANG.

#### SYPHILIS AMONG THE CHINESE FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

“ Pour expulser du sang le virus syphilitique, ils (les chinois) se servaient du mercure bien des siècles avant la découverte de l’Amérique.”—L. SOUBEIRAN.

[In order to expell the syphilitic virus from the blood, they (the Chinese) employed mercury many centuries before the discovery of America.]

IN 1863, Captain Dabry, consul at Hang-Keou, published a very complete work on China, from a medical point of view.<sup>1</sup> This *litterateur*, who was thoroughly acquainted with the Chinese language, had, fortunately for science, the idea<sup>2</sup> of translating the secular manuscripts which escaped the holocaust ordered by the Emperor *Tsin-che-houang*.<sup>3</sup> And these manuscripts, as Soubeiran will inform us soon, treat of nothing but medicine, and are curious in more than one respect. Objection will not be wanting that checking is not easy, and that there is no proof that these manuscripts are not of recent manufacture. We will content ourselves with answering that Captain Dabry, not being a physician, had no interest whatever in upholding the antiquity of

<sup>1</sup> P. Dabry: *la Médecine chez les Chinois*. Paris, 1863. *Medicine Among the Chinese*.

<sup>2</sup> He thus exceeded the expectations of M. Rollet, who had simply requested him to answer a few written questions on the venereal diseases of the ancient Chinese. Dabry returned with a large volume, a valuable document for retrospective science.

<sup>3</sup> *Anglicé, Tsin-che-Hoang*.



the diseases considered among us as modern; that the Chinese, ignorant of the old quarrel which has divided the medical world of Europe for three centuries in respect to syphilis, would not have amused themselves manufacturing mountains of manuscript to favor one opinion to the detriment of the other; that few persons, among Europeans, are, even now, able to commit such forgeries, and, above all, in a position to place them in the archives or analogous building in Peking; finally, that Dabry, far from defending a thesis, has simply translated a collection of manuscripts, and that these had the characteristics of age sufficiently marked not to be considered as recent. Besides, each one of these manuscripts has its history, and they are certainly kept in a secure place. We are not far from believing that, even in his position as consul, Dabry had considerable difficulty in obtaining access to them. To those who might be inclined to express a doubt as to the literary good faith of the translator, we think it sufficient to remind them that Dabry was an officer and represented France.

Here we will make a digression. The above paragraph had already been written several months when we had occasion to peruse a work of the eighteenth century, in which was stated, among other details, that Astruc had a knowledge of Chinese manuscripts treating of syphilis. It is not necessary to feel much surprised by this fact, which, at first sight, may seem strange. As a matter of fact, Astruc, who would have rejected the same evidence in his efforts to uphold before and against all that syphilis did not appear in Europe until 1494, admitted willingly that it might have existed from time immemorial in other parts of the world. The best proof is in a passage in "Jourdan de



Pellerin,"<sup>1</sup> which we will quote entire. This document is the more valuable as the information emanates from Astruc himself, and confirms the authenticity of the manuscripts with which we will occupy ourselves in this chapter. The following is the passage in question:—

We owe to the indefatigable, fortunate, and useful care of M. Astruc, an account of China, which informs us—

1. That, in that empire, venereal diseases are spread in the same manner as in Europe.

2. That Chinese physicians believe that it has been spread *from all time*.

3. That the medical books which are regarded as the oldest, far from speaking of the beginning of the disease, speak of it only as a *very ancient disease*.

4. Finally, that the remedies for these diseases are particularly *mercury*. . . .

Comments are unnecessary. The forgery of documents, already very difficult in 1864, would have been impossible in 1740. We shall see, later on, that Astruc did not stop here, but furnished himself, without suspecting it, all the material necessary for his own refutation without any possible answer.

A year after its appearance, the work of Dabry was quoted by a physician of Florence, Dr. Galligo, who has devoted a very interesting chapter to this history of syphilis, in his work on venereal diseases.<sup>2</sup> Ten years later, M. Lancereaux, in his excellent work, also gave several extracts.<sup>3</sup> With the exception of these authors and a few others, who have analyzed it in articles for dictionaries or in medical journals,<sup>4</sup> I do not know that

<sup>1</sup> *Traité sur les maladies vénériennes*. Paris, 1749. *Treatise on Venereal Diseases*.

<sup>2</sup> J. Galligo: *Trattato teoretico-pratico sulle malattie veneree*. Firenze, 1884. *Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Venereal Diseases*.

<sup>3</sup> Lancereaux: *Traité historique et pratique de la syphilis*. Paris, 1873. *Historical and Practical Treatise on Syphilis*.

<sup>4</sup> M. Verneuil, in the *Archives de Médecine* (1863), gave an account of the work at the time of its appearance.



the book of Dabry has been given that attention which it deserves. We will examine it a little more in detail, leaving the author speak as often as possible.

We learn from the researches of the captain, in the historical documents of China, that the most ancient emperor, whose name has come down to us, is *Chin-nong*, who lived three thousand two hundred and sixteen years before Christ; then, among prominent names, we find *Hoang-ty*, about a thousand years later; and the entire dynasty of *Tchou*, which began in 1222 B.C.

At a time which exactly corresponds to the year 2637 B.C., the Emperor Hoang-ty, solicitous of the health of his people, caused all the documents on medicine to be collected, and carefully reduced to writing on parchment all the traditions in regard to therapeutics. Europeans, at that time, were still frightful savages who devoured their captives, as shown by the researches of Le Baron on the diseases of prehistoric man, of which we have spoken. As a matter of fact, the majority of the remains found in the bone caves, of human or animal origin, bore the traces of the action of fire. Among the long bones, some were half calcined and others split in half by a flint instrument, but all in the same manner. The author, agreeing in this respect with the most celebrated anthropologists (Broca, Parrot, etc.), concludes that these vertical incisions had for their object the extraction of the marrow of the bone after it was cooked.<sup>1</sup> The sons of Noah and their descendants—that is to say, our ancestors of the diluvian formation—were then horrible anthropophagi! This is flattering to our species! As for me, I limit myself to the statement that we have nothing with which to reproach the savages of America, not even syphilis.

<sup>1</sup> Le Baron, *loc. cit.*



Hoang-ty, armed with all these documents,—having all his notes, as we would say nowadays,—wrote or caused to be written the celebrated treatise which bears his name, *Hoang-ty-mi-king*; that is to say, the medical treatise of Hoang-ty. “This work” (*Nuei-king*), says Subeiran, in his preface to Dabry’s book, “is certainly the most curious one in existence from a point of view of the history of medicine. As medical books were excepted from the edict of proscription of *Tsin-che-hoang*, the *burner of books*, we cannot doubt that China possesses the most valued secrets of antiquity. What lessons may not be expected, especially when we consider that forty centuries of experiments and observations have enlarged this treasure with an infinity of discoveries religiously transmitted from age to age!”

A little further on, in showing the knowledge of the Chinese in therapeutics at an epoch nearer to the deluge than ours, Soubeiran adds: “From time immemorial, they add to their remedies carbonate of soda, sulphate of iron, . . . sulphur, with which they cured the itch, known for more than four thousand years under the name of *tchong-kai* (words which signify *pustules formed by a worm*); . . . *mercury* to expell the syphilitic virus from the blood, and which they employed many centuries before the discovery of America.” . . .

Even supposing the manuscript to be recent, the word *tchong-kai* is not: as soon as the Chinese knew the itch they found the *acarus*, as the Chinese name implies, and they understood that sulphur, in killing the sarcoptes, cured the cutaneous affection caused by it. How many cases of itch in Europe, how much syphilis, eczemas, and cutaneous affections, in fact, were held up to public horror in the Middle Ages under the con-



venient name of *leprosy*! How many unfortunates were incarcerated or hounded, in whom a little sulphur ointment or some mercury would have sufficed to cure them!

The medical treatise of Hoang-ty is divided in about the same manner as that of Hippocrates. General principles are piled up pell-mell; then are found several chapters dealing with particular diseases. When we arrive at that one treating of venereal diseases we are stupefied. The numbers 2637 added to 1889 give us 4526: so that it is forty-five centuries ago that the emperor Hoang-ty caused all the documents on the diseases of his time in China to be collected. Venereal diseases were better known than at the time Astruc wrote (1742), or even before Ricord. One would not expect to find a complete treatise; the symptoms are certainly described in a succinct manner, but one is forced to acknowledge that the Chinese, more than twenty centuries before Christ, knew the duality of the chancre established in our days by Ricord, and knew that gonorrhœa had nothing in common with syphilis, of which they were not yet certain at the beginning of this century. We may well be possessed of a legitimate stupefaction in recognizing the astonishing precocity of this people, who seem to have been slumbering for a long time. Let us remember that they had invented gunpowder when Europe was still using ballistæ and cross-guns. And it is presumable that syphilis, which was described by the Chinese, together with its treatment by mercury, four thousand five hundred and twenty-six years ago, was known long before the appearance of the *Hoang-ty-mi-king*, which is nothing but a collection of secular traditions upon the art of healing. Everything leads to the idea that the *Sons of Heaven* observed and treated their syphilides since and perhaps before the deluge.



Without wishing to anticipate one of our future publications, we may say that a somewhat similar phenomenon produced itself in the fifteenth century. The remedies relating to syphilis existed in a traditional state, but among a certain class only, and the physicians of the time proceeded in the same manner as Hoang-ty: on the whole, they merely reduced to writing the empirical formulæ transmitted orally for centuries. As is positively stated by a contemporary of the epidemic, Gaspard Torella,<sup>1</sup> and thirty years later Jacques de Béthencourt,<sup>2</sup> physicians never penetrated into the quarters of the prostitutes, did not treat them, and ignored the diseases endemic to the Cour des Miracles<sup>3</sup> and other analogous localities. The remedies were in the hands of quacks, and of courtesans, even. "Venus ill had to be taken care of by Venus well," says M. Netter, in a humorous article.<sup>4</sup> The physicians, understanding nothing of this complex epidemic, at first refused to attend the sick; these then applied to healers of all kinds, people of the worst sort, vagabonds, jugglers, procuresses, and prostitutes (Torella). And what proves that venereal diseases and their treatment were known in places of debauchery is, that a certain John Bale, writing, in a manuscript of the sixteenth century, of a certain Hugh Weston, a doctor of divinity and dean of Windsor in 1556, says that this debauchee was "more expert in the art of healing *burning* than all the whores of the stews."

These healers of one or of the other sex had marvelous successes, especially with their mercurial rubbings,

<sup>1</sup> Tractatus cum consiliis contra pudendam. . . . Romæ, 1497. Treatise with Advice for the Diseases of the Pudenda (Shameful Parts).

<sup>2</sup> Nouveau Carême de pénitence et purgatoire du mal vénérien. Rome, 1527. New Lent of Penance and Purgatory of the Venereal Disease.

<sup>3</sup> An old quarter in Paris, somewhat similar to Whitechapel, London.

<sup>4</sup> Gazette des Hôpitaux, 1872.



which was their favorite remedy (Béthencourt). There is nothing surprising in this, for quicksilver, which played an important rôle in alchemy in the middle ages, must have been tried very early by beggars and ribalds. Whatever it was, such was the source from which the first physicians, who wished to make therapeutic rules for the disease which was new to them, derived their inspiration. It required the expedition of Naples, and the movements of troops consequent upon it, for syphilis to leave the domain of prostitution, where it was in a certain measure confined, and spread itself to all classes of European society.

M. Netter, in his interesting study of which we have spoken, is astonished, with reason, that a disease dating back but thirty years at the time Béthencourt wrote, could have been suddenly described with all its symptoms, even the most exceptional, and particularly that the specific remedy should have been immediately found. "Nothing seems to have been forgotten," he exclaims, "neither the initial contagion, nor the cutaneous eruption, nor the nocturnal pains, nor the exostoses, nor the caries, nor the cirrhosis of the liver, nor even the terminal consumption, so rare!" He concludes that Béthencourt and companions did nothing but appropriate the medical knowledge of one-quarter of the people of the time. This is the secret of many discoveries; but everybody does not possess the scientific honesty of that great physician, who sincerely confesses that it was solely to verify a popular tradition that he occupied himself with vaccination. "Sarah Portock," says he, among other things, "was convinced that she was protected from small-pox, because *twenty years before* she had been infected by *cow-pox*." The English physician wanted to have his mind clear on that point. As he was



an investigator, he substituted for an accident his lancet dipped in the liquid of the pustules of a heifer. The same result. The same immunity; vaccination had been found. Thus, one of the greatest conquests of the medical art of modern times owed its origin to the gossip of a milk-maid! It is true that of those who heard it, only one understood; this man was Edward Jenner. Is this not another case of repeating: *Nihil sub sole novum?*

Vaccination for syphilis has also been tried. The success of Jenner would naturally lead to such experiments; but the vaccine was not forthcoming. We will recur to this subject at the proper time. Up to this time, it is on man himself that this vaccine has been looked for, but uselessly. Who knows but that it will some day be found upon one of our domestic animals? It is, perhaps, at Maisons-Alfort<sup>1</sup> that the key to the problem exists. We have wandered somewhat from our Chinese manuscripts; let us hasten to return to them.

Hoang-ty first describes gonorrhœa (*pe-teho*) as it would be in 1889. He distinguishes the simple burning, whose duration is relatively short, the *virulent* discharge of which he details the symptoms. Then he comes to chancres. The first paragraph is devoted to the soft chancre, the eroding chancre, the one "which develops from the *third to the ninth day*," and which may cause considerable loss of substance. The author then speaks of the resultant bubo, and of the vegetations which may occur upon the generative organs.

In the following paragraph, we find the description of an entirely different species of chancre. This second chancre is produced by a virus of a peculiar nature (*kan-tou*), and is communicable by contact. "It may

<sup>1</sup> The principal veterinary college of France is situated in this place.



happen," says the Chinese text, "that a woman meets a man whose vitiated blood develops the virus of which we have been speaking. This virus will cause an *ulcer*, and will *spread itself throughout the entire volume of the blood.*" An analogous passage, longer and more obscure, is found in the *Ayurveda*, a Hindoo medical treatise (see chapter ix), written by a royal prince. Hoang-ty recurs to the eroding chancre, which is *painful*, has *worm-eaten edges*, and shows the difference existing between this one and the second variety. "The latter," he adds, "is accompanied very frequently by tumors (*hiue-san-chan-on-pien-jong*)." These tumors might be ganglionic engorgements, or papulo-hypertrophic syphilides, but the text does not give their location. As treatment, is advised *mercurial frictions*, aided by an oily mixture and a powder composed of mercury (*choui-yn*).

So much for the primary lesion; let us now examine the secondary period. We leave the Chinese monarch speak:—

It sometimes happens that, several months after the cure of a venereal trouble, the patient suddenly experiences *headache* with *fever*, *pains in the bones*, and vertigo; shortly after there appear on the forehead small spots of a coppery red (*tan-hong*), which increase little by little. The face swells, and principally the nose; speech is difficult; there is pain and itching in the throat. . . . These spots are changed into violaceous pimples of the size of a pea, allowing a thick liquid of a fetid odor to escape, the body is soon covered with spots and pimples of a like nature; mucosities run from the nose; the breath is insupportable. The pimples, once excoriated, increase in size. . . . Sometimes the pains are only felt *at night*.

Here is a whole paragraph devoted to syphilitic affections of the mouth and throat:—

Section 6. *Keou-yay-tou* (poison of the mouth and throat). It sometimes happens, as a lesion consecutive to a chancre, after a period of time more or less long, that an ulceration forms in one of the two glands



found at the entrance of the throat,<sup>1</sup> or on the membrane which covers the palate near the throat, or, finally, in the throat itself at a certain depth. This ulceration is *white*; the edges are straight and of a coppery red (*tan-hong*); the surrounding parts are violaceous, similar to corrupt skin (*py-lan*). . . . The breath is burning and fetid; the ulcerated part bleeds as soon as the patient becomes angry.

This is what occurs nowadays, when children, who have mucous plaques of the lips with fissures at the commissures, begin to cry: a tear, with a slight hæmorrhage, is produced. Hoang-ty adds that the ulcer appears most often at the base of the tongue, that sometimes, also, that organ is suddenly covered with *white patches*, and that small *gray pustules*, which become excoriated, suddenly show themselves upon the *edges and tip*. He again says:—

It sometimes happens that, following an imperfectly healed chancre, there forms around the anus (*kong-men*) red or white spots, which are extremely small, and often painful and pruriginous. . . . Sometimes the edges of the anus are excoriated; at other times the body is covered with small red pustules, which disappear under pressure.

Section 7 is unimportant for our purpose; in the following one is found the description of syphilitic, papulo-hypertrophic, ulcerative patches of the margin of the anus. The author mentions, incidentally, the pigmentary syphilide of the neck:—

Section 8. *Che-kong-tou* (moist poison around the anus). Small spots, as large as millet-seed, of a coppery red, appear in variable numbers upon the perineum, scrotum, buttocks, and the superior and internal surface of the thighs. Little by little they become large, moist, exhale an odor of fetid sweat, and produce a slight itching.

It sometimes happens that, thirty or forty days after the lesion derived from an impure connection, plaques, very small spots, either white or of a coppery red, surrounded by a red areola (*tche-pe-yeou-fong*), appear upon several parts of the body. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Evidently referring to the tonsils.



Sometimes there suddenly appears, after a venereal lesion, patches of *white spots* spread *under the neck*. Very shortly after, the whole body is covered with violaceous, red, or yellow spots.

The author also speaks of *tan-tou* (*red poison*) and of *tien-ho-tchoang* (ulcer, fire of heaven). "This disease," he says, "is sometimes *transmissible to children* who are new-born." He then describes syphilitic coryza under the name of nasal chancre (*py-ting*). In cases called *py-yuen* the symptoms are the same, but the bones drop out (caries and necrosis). Finally, it is the *yang-mey-tchoang* (ulcer in the form of raspberry), which may be compared to the modern *frambæsia*, of which we will speak later on. In conclusion, he gives a very exact description of the ulcerated papulo-hypertrophic syphilides, with their ichorous and fetid discharge.

We could make many more quotations; but they would not prove anything additional, and would lead to repetitions. The treatise of Hoang-ty will certainly be accused of being somewhat prolix, and of being far from didactic in construction. What matters it? The main teaching, which develops itself from these documents contemporaneous with the great-grand-nephews of Noah, is that syphilis was a current disease among the Chinese at this epoch, and its nature better known than among the Europeans at the beginning of the nineteenth century.



## CHAPTER VI.

### KASA.

#### SYPHILIS IN JAPAN, OBSERVED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINTH CENTURY.<sup>1</sup>

“Le mot *kasa*, en japonais ancien comme en japonais moderne, sert à désigner les affections contagieuses qui surviennent après les relations sexuelles et qu'on connaît très bien aujourd'hui au Japon.”—DUPOUY.

[The word *kasa* in ancient Japanese, as in the modern, serves to designate the contagious diseases which supervene after sexual relations, and which are to-day very well known in Japan.]

AFTER having consulted a number of works regarding medicine in Japan (Ardoin,<sup>2</sup> Elridge,<sup>3</sup> and others), we began to despair of finding the least document regarding the antiquity of syphilis in that country, when, in reading the *Archiv für Pathologische Anatomie* of Virchow, we found an article by Dr. Scheube,<sup>4</sup> which made us give a sigh of relief. A few days later, in scanning the recent work of Dr. Dupouy,<sup>5</sup> we found, reproduced

<sup>1</sup> Although the information we have been able to obtain in regard to Japan does not date any earlier than the ninth century of our era, a period which corresponds with that which historians have called the Middle Ages for Europe and Africa, we have deemed it best to place this study after that which we have just made on China. Besides, these two peoples have the same origin: it is well known that the islands which constitute the present Empire of Japan were occupied by an Asiatic colony, probably from China, at a time which it is difficult to determine, but certainly after the dynasty of Tcheou (1222 B.C.). In fact, the first historical date of Japan, according to the researches of Dr. Michéa, was six hundred and sixty years before the Christian era.

<sup>2</sup> *Aperçu sur l'histoire de la médecine au Japon*. Paris, 1884. Synopsis of the History of Medicine in Japan.

<sup>3</sup> “Syphilis in Japan,” in *New York Medical Journal*, 1882.

<sup>4</sup> *Archiv für Pathologische Anatomie* (März, 1883, Capit. XXIV).

<sup>5</sup> *La Prostitution dans l'antiquité*. Paris, 1887. Prostitution in Antiquity.



in French, the principal passages of Dr. Scheube's article. M. G. Tissot, a pharmacist of the first class, kindly assisted us in completing the translation; so that we are enabled to furnish full information.

The article in the German medical journal concerns a Japanese manuscript dating A.D. 808. This valuable document has for title: *Dai-do-rui-shiu-ho*, which means: *A collection of formulas arranged in classes, of the period of Dai-do.* At that time, the emperor, Heizei-Tenno, seeing his country more and more invaded by Chinese sciences, thought of the same project as the emperor of China, Hoang-ty, although thirty-five centuries later; that is to say, he formed the resolution of gathering in one book all the elements concerning medicine, such as it was then practiced in Japan. He confided this work to his two physicians, A-be-ma-nao and Idzu-mo Hiro-sada. But the manuscript was soon lost or stolen, we do not exactly know: suffice it to say, that for more than a thousand years no one heard of it. At all events, in 1827, a shop-keeper of the province of Bungo (island of Kiushiu) found a well-preserved manuscript, in a pagoda of that country; it was the medical treatise of Heizei-Tenno, which the honest tradesman hurried to return to the proper authorities. Since that time, it has been published a number of times as a very curious work.

This work, which is similar to the most ancient writings of Japan, is written in old Japanese, which renders its translation very difficult, for the Japanese themselves have much difficulty in understanding the meaning. It was then almost unknown to the learned world of the extreme East, when Dr. Kayama, a physician of Kioto (Japan), who had studied in Leipzig, studied this document with care, and established the



meaning of many obscure passages. In the course of this work he became aware that certain paragraphs, which had not yet attracted the attention of the medical world of his country, evidently treated of venereal diseases, and notably of syphilis. Immediately, with that spirit of disseminating science which is no longer surprising in a people with ideas as broad and advancing as rapidly on the road of progress, Dr. Kayama translated the principal passages into German and sent them to Dr. Scheube, his former teacher, with a note in regard to the manuscript. So far as interpretation is concerned the professor of Kioto may be depended upon, for this physician applied for aid, in elucidating the difficult portions, to learned Japanese, his countrymen.

The work is divided into one hundred chapters; the first thirteen are long lists of medicines and methods of using remedies. The rest of the manuscript relates to diseases; the authors recognize one hundred and twenty-two; but these are rather groups of symptoms enumerated without order than descriptions of diseases properly so called. The confusion which is present in all the paragraphs should not be surprising in a work which is nearly eleven centuries old. Thus may be found under the same title symptoms belonging to very dissimilar affections. For instance, constipation is given in conjunction with syphilitic arthritis, and osteocopic pains as an accident of the second phase of a disease which affects the penis. Beyond these errors, which are almost fatal, it does not require very close attention to discover in the midst of the physical signs, described *grosso modo*, the course of syphilis very clearly mapped out. The three periods are described in their natural order and with their principal signs. However, the reader will be able to judge.



All the paragraphs relating to genital affections bear the heading *KASA* (literally: *eruption*), which serves as well to designate a chancre of the penis as a suppurating inguinal bubo, or syphilitic angina. Two chapters are devoted to venereal diseases. In Chapter XCIV, under the title *Kata-shine-kata* (eruption of one of the groins), is found a very clear description of suppurating adenitis. The paragraph which follows treats of the *chancre* in general, and more especially the soft chancre. As there is no special description of the indurated chancre, everything would lead to think that, as it does not pain and does not burrow, the latter was considered an attenuation of the ordinary type:—

Section 2. *Mara-kasa-yami* (eruptive disease of the penis).—In the beginning, a swelling as large as a millet-seed, with pain. After a few days, *ulceration* and a flow of pus.

Here comes, under the head *Fuse-kasa*, the œdema of the prepuce which so often accompanies the infecting chancre, and the consequent temporary phimosis:—

Section 3. The skin of the penis, the seat of the eruption, contains water. . . The penis is swelled and much increased in volume. The swelling extends to the entire penis, and the glans cannot be seen from the outside. Pus flows from the skin.

The description which then follows is that of the *phagedenic chancre*, which has become serpiginous. The authors state that this trouble begins like the simple chancre:—

Section 4. *Schiri-mara-kasa* (other form of eruption of the penis).—In the beginning an eruption like the preceding one shows itself. Then come on ulceration and pain. At the end of a few days the ulceration extends and the glans drops off. Then the ulceration goes backward some, the penis falls off entire, and the testicles are similarly invaded by the ulceration.

So much for the local venereal symptoms, among which is concealed the primary lesion, no doubt con-



sidered as amounting to very little by the Japanese of the ninth century; however, before Ricord, Europe did not suspect the duality of the chancre to any greater extent. We will now observe the second period,—that is to say, the disease becoming general; the osteocopic pains of tertiary processes of the face are equally noted:

Section 5. *Hashiri-kasa* (running eruption).—The *poison*<sup>1</sup> of the penis rises, and the eruption becomes invading. Heat and cold declare themselves, and the *bones* of the extremities become *painful*. After a few months, a small eruption, without pain or itching, appears upon the back and face. . . . Still later, the face is attacked by *caries*, spreads a fetid odor, and runs pus.

Chapter XCV, or at least the extract published by Dr. Kayama, is particularly devoted to the tertiary lesions of syphilis. What confusion! What gropings! How many repetitions! Let us be indulgent with the authors, for we shall soon see that, after the year 1000, our *leeches*<sup>2</sup> described all the venereal diseases, even gonorrhœa, under the name of *leprosy*!

This second chapter begins with the lesions of the second period,—fever, ostitis, and syphilitic arthritis; besides, osteocopic pains are spoken of. The authors do not fail to notice the relations existing between these phenomena and the ulceration of the penis which has cicatrized long before.

Section 1. *Hone-no-hari-kasa* (eruption and swelling of the bones).—*After the cure of the eruption of the penis, the joints* of the limbs become *painful*, in such a way that they cannot be extended nor flexed. There exists in general a *fever*. Then the poison rises, and different disagreeable phenomena come on. The bones are *painful*. . . . Constipation is present. . . .

The virus has not completed its work; we are going to see it attack the throat, first, as a *syphilitic angina*;

<sup>1</sup> To-day we say *virus*.

<sup>2</sup> [The author uses the word *mire*, signifying the physician of the Middle Ages.]



later, it will be tertiary ulcerations, with caries of the bones of the face, and even of the skull. These lesions, says the Japanese text, require years to heal, when they do heal.

Section 2. *Nondo-fui-kasa* (eruption of the throat).—The rest of the poison of the eruption of the penis *extends to the upper regions*; the mucous membrane of the throat is swollen and painful. At the end of a few days there is a sanious discharge and a general rotting, which, after many years, is not yet cured. . . . The poison eats the skin of the head, the flesh, and the bones. . . .

Then follow some rather vague details, in which, however, the tertiary period always recurs:—

Then occur the ear diseases, or the nasal eruptions, and the *nose drops off*; or, again, it is the *ophthalmias*. . . . The poison attacks the entire economy; the testicles are covered with *eruptions* and *ulcerate*. . . . The entire surface of the body is attacked.

Section 3 has its title only, *Ana-kasa*; that is to say, *eruption of the anus* (*Lochausschlag* [eruption of the hole], in the German journal). Could the Japanese word *ana* and the Latin *anus* have the same origin?

Section 4, entitled *Mimi-no-hi-kasa* (eruption of the ears), is concerning auditory troubles following otorrhœas.

It is here that the valuable communication of Dr. Kayama, on “*Syphilis in Japan in the Year 808*,” ceases. This learned practitioner adds that he can teach us nothing in particular in respect to treatment, as many of the passages of the manuscript are unintelligible. The text speaks of a few plants of no therapeutic importance. We will state, in conclusion, that in the “world,” at Yeddo, the disease is designated by such appellations as *baidoku* (mushroom-virus), or *so-doku* (virus of eruptive form). But among the people it has preserved its ten-centuried name of KASA. Similarly, in France, educated persons employ the word *syphilis*, but the people still



say the *disease*, or the *pox*, like the physicians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries [or, as many of the English-speaking people say, the *bad disease*].



## CHAPTER VII.

### SYPHILIS AMONG THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS AT THE TIME OF THE PHARAOKS (FOURTEENTH CENTURY B.C.).

“ Ne faut douter qu'un tel mal (*la peste d'Egypte*) ne fust nostre verole d'apresent.”—GUILLAUMET.<sup>1</sup>

[There is no doubt but that such a disease (the Egyptian plague) was our pox of to-day.]

THE information furnished by Egypt from the point of view now occupying us is of very small importance. We hasten to recognize this, and we only give it as a matter of archæological curiosity. Besides, it can be understood how difficult it is, in a pictured language as old as that of the Egyptians,—and of which there only remains inscriptions on granite, or shreds of phrases traced on papyri,—to find descriptions referable to syphilis. At all events, if we do not lose sight of the fact that Egypt, in common with Syria and Chaldea,<sup>2</sup> was for a long time the centre of all debaucheries, we cannot see why this nation, with its worship of the phallus, should have been spared. If the Egyptian temples possessed the ancestor of our *bœuf gras*<sup>3</sup> (which has disappeared since 1870), the *bull Apis*, whose rôle was purely decorative, in revenge, they inclosed the goat *Mendes*, who was destined to satisfy the most monstrous lubricity. The nymphomaniacs of Egypt, we are led to believe, were locked up in the temples with this monstrous beast, and submitted to his assaults (Villemont). Of what

<sup>1</sup> *Traité de la cristalline.* Lyon, 1611.

<sup>2</sup> We will merely recall the fact that Chaldea had for its capital Babylon, whose reputation is well known.

<sup>3</sup> The *bœuf gras* was a bull forming the central attraction of an annual procession in Paris.



orgies were they not capable, these enervated beings, whom the most stupefying mental aberration led up to bestiality! And syphilis should have gone through such a nation without acquiring the freedom of citizenship? It is hardly admissible.

The hieroglyphics which we see upon monuments deal with historical events; the accounts found upon the papyri preserved in France, Germany, at Turin, at London, and at Athens relate to domestic robberies, to the flight of a slave, etc.; or else they are precepts, maxims,—the *Maxims of Ani*, for example. Upon others are found details in regard to the interior police of the kingdom of the time of the Pharaohs, or to the laws of the times. Up to the present but two papyri have been found relating to medicine,—one, the *Medical Papyrus*, forms part of the collection of the Berlin Museum; M. Chabas, one of our learned Egyptologists, gave a detailed analysis of it in 1867.<sup>1</sup> The other, known as the *Ebers Papyrus*,<sup>2</sup> was bought from a Copt at Luxor by Professor Ebers, who published it in 1875. M. Chabas has given us the substance of it in a notice which appeared the following year in his journal, *l'Egyptologie*.<sup>3</sup>

The *Medical Papyrus*, of Berlin, was commenced by King Thoth, as the text shows; and after his death it was continued by King Snat. It is not even a nomenclature of receipts; it is a collection of remedies (?) for different diseases, which are, on the whole, very obscurely designated. All that can be concluded is that ophthalmias were quite frequent among the Egyptians, for the greater part of these more or less scientific receipts refer

<sup>1</sup> *Mélanges Egyptologiques*, vol. i. Chalon-sur-Saône, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> *Ebers' Papyrus*. Leipzig, 1875.

<sup>3</sup> F. Chabas: *l'Egyptologie*, vol. i. Chalon-sur-Saône, 1876.



to eye diseases which are not specified. Clysters were held in very high repute, which goes to show that the persecutors of M. de Pourceaugnac<sup>1</sup> did not have the merit of invention. But the most curious part of this small collection is undoubtedly that which discusses the methods of finding if a woman is capable of becoming pregnant, and even of telling beforehand of what sex the child will be. The procedure is original, but it is not cleanly; may its great age excuse it (four thousand years)! The royal author of the treatise on therapeutics (!) counsels placing in the *natural passage*<sup>2</sup> of the woman two small bags containing, one some wheat, the other barley, previously steeped in . . . the urine of the *candidate for maternity*. If the wheat sprouts, she will be delivered of a boy; if it is the barley, she will bear a girl; if there be no germination, the woman will remain sterile.<sup>3</sup> After giving a few procedures of a like import, the book terminates with a long list of reconstructive ingredients, injections. As may be seen, it would be a difficult matter to find any allusion to syphilis any more than to typhoid fever, of which no one, as far as I know, denies the antiquity.

This is not the case with the *Ebers Papyrus*, which goes into greater details and touches medicine properly so called. It seems to go back to the reign of Rameses II,—Maëamoun, otherwise known as Sesostris. If this be true, it is three thousand years old. The editing is not a little mixed, and it would not be an easy matter to make any diagnosis of all this hotch-potch of symptoms piled up without order or method. Nevertheless,

<sup>1</sup> Apothecaries, who formerly administered rectal injections.

<sup>2</sup> Chabas has substituted asterisks for this expression.

<sup>3</sup> We have found the same idea expressed in an old English work dating back three centuries.



if we are to believe the interpretation of Chabas, certain descriptions would seem to have reference to constitutional syphilis; the ancient Egyptians, it would seem, noticed the relations which exist between certain lesions, which may be referred to the secondary and to the tertiary periods. This papyrus includes a series of hieroglyphic groups, of which certain ones deserve to be mentioned.

“There is,” says Chabas, “a group which designates a disease located upon the *belly*, in the *extremities*, in the *joints*, in the *eyes*, and in the teeth (*gums*), and which is sufficiently *frequent* to deserve particular mention among those things which are noxious. The treatment is very varied, according to its location (external applications, fumigations, injections [rectal], etc.). The trouble is sometimes sufficiently *grave* to require supernatural means, consisting of a mystical formula repeated four times, and spitting on the diseased parts.”

“This same disorder sometimes has its seat also in the *mouth*; . . . it also attacks the *anus*.”

The author notes, under the head “Diseases of the Limbs,” the *tophi* on the arms, the *sore of the leg*. “At one time,” says the translator, “*inflammation of the arms* is placed in relationship with swelling (or *tumor*?) of the *legs*.” Receipts are also found to cure the disease of the tongue, ulcers of the gums, etc., but it is all too vague to make us halt.

Further on we read: “Clysters caused the disappearance of eruptions which caused crusts of the flesh.” All this proves that affections of the skin of a pustulo-crustaceous form were known to the Egyptians, but it proves nothing more. Next comes a remedy for “boils with fetid suppuration;” then quite a number of topical applications for the sexual parts, notably “for the



pimples in the vagina ; for the pains in the lips ; to cool the *inflamed vagina* ; for the inflammatory *fissures* in the vagina, etc.” What are these pimples of the vagina, or, rather, vulva? Perhaps vegetations; but why not papular syphilides? This inflammation of the vagina might be of gonorrhœal nature; as to the fissures, they may be attributed to whatever one pleases, as erosions may.

Chabas terminates his review with these words: “ In the group describing skin diseases it is difficult to designate those which are especially applicable to tetter (*dartres*), to the itch, to chancres, etc. The study of the remedies employed may clear the path. There may be distinguished receipts for pruritus, for swellings or *tumors* in all the limbs, *especially the leg*.” It is to be regretted that Chabas did not designate those remedies which, according to him, might *clear the way*; it is also to be regretted that he was not a physician, for he could have derived authoritative conclusions from the Egyptian text. And while we are expressing regrets let us regret, above all, that our countryman, Mariette-Bey, could not transmit in dying his Egyptological science to the children of Boulogne-sur-Mèr. We could then have interpreted the *fac-simile* of the *Ebers Papyrus*.

At all events, the publication of Ebers is accompanied by an Egyptian-Coptic-Latin glossary, in which we have found these words:—

AXAT, morbus vulvæ ; that is, *disease of the vulva*. (Which one?)

ASIT, morbus leprosus? that is, a *disease in the form of leprosy*.  
(The author is not sure !)

ANUT, plaga vel ulcus ; that is, a *sore or ulcer*. (Of what nature?)

BENTET, that is, *vegetations of woman*. (Are they condylomata, properly so called, or other morbid products?)



SETET, that is, *bubo*. (It would be interesting to know whether it is a suppurating bubo or not.)

MEHES, *ulcus quoddam*; that is, *any ulcer*. (It is not much in the way of information.)

It is quite certain that we cannot form any induction from these obscure texts alone that syphilis existed among the ancient Egyptians; but when we consider that they had the Hebrews among them for a long time, the medical history of the latter of which we will study, there can exist no doubt. We will also see, in the next chapter, that Pharaoh contracted syphilis from Sarah, the wife of Abraham.

If it is admitted that this disease has existed among all peoples and at all times, one cannot help but see, as we do, secondary, tertiary, and, perhaps, primary lesions in the quotations we have given. On this account, we would counsel our readers to re-read this chapter on Egypt, after becoming acquainted with those dealing with the Greek and Roman nations. They will see that syphilis—designated by Martial, Horace, Juvenal, etc., under the different names of *figs* (*ficus*) or large figs (*marisca*<sup>1</sup>), of *Syrian tumors*, *Egyptian ulcers*, etc.—followed the march of invasion of Western people by the Orientals. It accompanied the Asiatic debauchery in Greece, in Rome, and among the Gauls.

<sup>1</sup> Also denominated *hæmorrhoids*, *emerods*, *émeraudes*.



SYPHILIS AMONG THE ANCIENT ASSYRIANS AND  
BABYLONIANS, 700 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

On the Assyrio-Babylonian cuneiform inscription tablets in the British museum, derived from the royal library of Asurbanipalus (Sardanapalus), it is related that Istar, the goddess of sinful love, of fruitfulness, of war, etc., and the mother of gods and men, proposed to Izdubar (Nimrod) to become his wife,—a proposition which he very ungallantly refused. Istar demanded satisfaction for this insult from her father, Anu. As a result, the sacred bull was sent against Izdubar and his friend, Eabani. According to some ancient Babylonian seal-cylinders, the latter took hold of the animal by grasping one horn and the root of its tail, while Izdubar bored its heart with some illy-defined weapon. Istar uttered an awful curse, to which Eabani replied by tearing out the *ibattu* (penis) of the bull and throwing it in her face.

A new curse, whose nature may be readily surmised, was hurled by the goddess, and Eabani died, after twelve days' illness. Izdubar was attacked by a terrible, painful disease (by leprosy, according to another interpreter). He wandered about until he reached the infernal region, where he was given a "magic food" for his disease. This either had no effect or it was merely

<sup>1</sup> This subchapter is added as a supplement to the preceding chapter, as not only bearing upon the subject, but on account of the similarity the story bears to the myths of other nations, explanatory of the origin of venereal diseases. I am indebted for this to an article published in *Monatshefte fuer Praktische Dermatologie*, May 1, 1891, by J. K. Proksch, who has laid under contribution the translations of Zahnpfund and Jeremias, the interpreters of the cuneiform inscriptions found on Babylonian bricks.—O-D.



preliminary, for Izdubar complained that the shadow of death lay on his genitals. Sit-napiôtim, the god of the infernal regions, took him to Ara-Ea, the ferryman, and bade him take the hero to the fountain of life, saying : "The man whom thou hast taken has his body covered with *pustules*; *scales* have altered the fairness of his body. Take him, Arad-Ea, to the *cleansing-place*, where he can wash his pustules clean with snow, and take off his *skins*; the sea will carry them off; his body will appear well. The *coverings of his head will be renewed*, as also the *covering of his shameful parts*; by the time he returns to his country there will be no folds; all will be new." Then follows, without interruption: "Arad-Ea then conducted him to the cleansing-place, washed his pustules in water like snow; he cast off his skins; the sea carried them off; his body appeared healthy. He renewed his head-coverings; the sheath which clothed his shameful parts was new when he reached his native land." The covering which invested his pudenda and "shall show no folds," "must be new," cannot be understood as meaning anything else than that the covering over or about his genitals must not become unclean through pathological secretions and become corroded or fold-like; it must be made new; *i.e.*, clean.

Eabani evidently had syphilis, for Izdubar says that he may not die like him. And Eabani had spent six days and seven nights dallying with the *lalû* of his beloved, Uchat. Among the ancient Orientals venereal diseases were the result either of exciting divine wrath or of sexual excesses. The name of the hierodulus—Uchat—points very plainly to the Uchet disease,—the *uχedu* or *uχetu*; that is, syphilis of the ancient Egyptians.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### SYPHILIS AMONG THE HEBREWS IN BIBLICAL TIMES.

“ Cette maladie (*la syphilis*) a un origine de plus loin (*que le xv<sup>e</sup> siècle*), comme nous en aurons de bons tesmoignages par les histoires saintes et prophanes.”—GUILLAUMET.<sup>1</sup>

[This disease (*syphilis*) has an origin going back further (than the xvth century), as we have good evidence in sacred and profane history.]

“ Guéris-moi, Eternel, car mes os sont frappés. . . .  
La nuit, je n'ai point de repos. . . . Il n'y à rien de sain  
dans ma chair.”—DAVID, *Psalms*.

[Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are stricken. . . .  
At night, I have no rest. . . . There is nothing sound in  
my flesh.]

IN order to write this chapter, we first studied the Bible carefully; then we absorbed the works of Rosenbaum, Astruc, Dufour, Villemont,<sup>2</sup> etc., and especially the excellent monograph of Dr. Hamonic, from which we will quote several extracts. Our friend will pardon us for limiting ourself to a few quotations from his work, which we would like to reproduce *in extenso*; but this first volume is already quite long. For that reason we refer the reader to his work, if he be desirous of becoming thoroughly acquainted with venereal diseases in Biblical times.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible contains a mass of allusions referring to venereal diseases, and especially to syphilis. Gonorrhœa, according to modern authors, is perfectly de-

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Hist. des malad. vénér. Paris, 1882. History of Venereal Diseases.

<sup>3</sup> P. Hamonic: des Malad. vénér. chez les Hébreux. Paris, 1887. Venereal Diseases among the Hebrews.



scribed; but it must be acknowledged that this truth has been recognized by all only since it has been known that this inflammatory affection is not a symptom of the primary period of syphilis. Astruc believed the contrary; and it will be seen, in our second volume, what useless pains this author took to deny the antiquity of gonorrhœa,—a thing which has become a modern axiom. This is not the case with the disease we are considering. We will answer, however, the same thing, whether it concern the Bible, the Vedas, or the works of Celsus, or of Hippocrates. It is not found there under its modern name; look for it in the symptoms, and you will find it. What is the Bible? A collection of stories, songs, laws, dogmas, moral counsels, and aphorisms, the whole clothed in an allegorical or symbolical garb, which was in accord with the religious poetry of that time. Among the precepts, the most brilliant are the rules for scrupulous cleanliness of Moses, the great hygienist, who could not have had them adopted, as well as other things, if he had not invoked Jehovah upon all occasions, and especially upon difficult matters. So that it is only for the physician free from all bias that a search in this long, secular poem—that descriptions or allusions which may be referred to one of the three periods of syphilis—will prove profitable.

In the fifth book of Proverbs, attributed to Solomon, will be found a few words of advice which go to show that visiting the hetairæ of the time might be followed by painful remembrances, capable of lasting for years, and of gravely compromising the general health. Solomon counsels to beware of them; his lessons have profited but little since his death. We will give the Latin version of the Hebrew text, from the edition of 1715, in the “*Bibliothèque Nationale*,” in order that the



reader may see for himself that our interpretation has nothing in it of a fantastical nature :—

v. 3. Favus enim distillans labia meretricis. . . .

v. 4. Novissima autem illius amara quasi absynthum, et acuta quasi gladius biceps.

v. 5. Pedes ejus descendunt in mortem. . . .

v. 8. Ne appropinques foribus domûs ejus. . . .

v. 9. Ne des alienis honorem tuum et annos tuos crudeli.

v. 11. Et gemas in novissimis quando consumeris carnes tuos et corpus tuum.

For the lips of the harlot distill honey. . . .

But the *consequences* are as *bitter* as worm-wood, and *sharp* as a double-edged sword.

Her feet lead down to death.

. . . .

Do not draw near the gate of her house. . . .

Lest thou shouldst give up thy honor to strangers, and the *remainder of thy life* to something *cruel*.

And that thou mayst not groan *later*, when thy *flesh* and thy *body* will have been *destroyed* through thy fault.

This *something cruel* which can bring on corruption seems to me to be a disease ; and this disease which infects the entire organism, as a result of converse with a *tradeswoman in love*, what can it be, if not syphilis ? For my part, I must humbly confess that I know of no other that would warrant Solomon's description. Our opponents may merely see, in these, regrets of a purely moral nature. Let us allow the *burning remorse* of more than one bachelor, and pass on.

In Ecclesiastes, a collection of maxims and moral counsels also attributed to Solomon, and which certain authors have confounded with the Ecclesiast of Jesus Syrac, a few verses are found which may also be referred to the tertiary period :—

Cap. xix, v. 3. Qui se jungit fornicariis, erit nequam ; putredo et vermes hereditabunt illum, et extolletur in exemplum majus. . . .

He who has relations with prostitutes will become unclean for everything ; gangrene and worms will seize upon him, and he will serve as a terrifying example to others. . . .



The idea of the debauchee who will soon be *rotten* (putredo), and who will see the worms crawling in his ulcerated gummata, is found in another passage, in which it is said that the libertine can reap, as the price of his caresses, nothing but worms and other parasitic insects (*vermes et tineas pro mercede reportare*). It is true that, at that time, the antiseptic method was unknown, and the smallest ulcer, no matter what its nature, was provided with a quantity of *grubs* that would make the dream of a fisherman. In our days, unless it be in a hospital on our left bank, where Lister is damned, the classic worms of which the Bible is so prodigal are unknown.

The following verses of Leviticus prove that there were ulcers whose scar was white, and others which preserved a brownish color, as in syphilis, for instance; but it proves nothing else. However, let us note that the Bible distinguishes between superficial ulcers, which only involve the skin, and deep ulcers, which arise in the thickness of the muscles:—

Cap. xiii, v. 18. Caro autem in  
carnis et cutis in quâ ulcus  
natum est et sanatum,

v. 19. et in loco ulceris cica-  
trix alba apparverit, sive sub-  
rusa . . .

If an ulcer has arisen in the  
skin or *within the flesh*, and it has  
healed,

and there appears, at the place  
where it existed, a scar, white or  
*somewhat reddish* . . .

All this is vague, it must be acknowledged; but these documents are not without some importance, as complementary proofs of the more conclusive arguments which Rome will soon furnish us.

Finally, in Chapter XV is found the famous verse quoted by all the authors who have desired to defend the antiquity of syphilis since the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, it demonstrates but one thing; that is,



that the Hebrews of Moses, like the Christians of Leo XIII, had frequent gonorrhœas. The Hebrew word, *mizobo*, if we are to believe the anonymous collaborator of Hamonic, literally signifies a *flow*, and not an *ejaculation*,—a phenomenon distinguished in verse 16 by the word *chighboth*. Here is verse 2, after the Latin *Vulgate*, so well known and misinterpreted :—

v. 2. . . . . Vir qui patitur fluxum [seminis], immundus erit.	. . . . . The man who has a flow [of semen] shall be deemed unclean.
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We have included the word *seminis* in brackets as it is superfluous, the translator having depended upon the Greek version of the Septuagint, without concerning himself with the Hebrew. The expression, ῥεον γόνου (loss of seed, pollution), which is given for the word *mizobo*, is a contradiction; for Moses declares as also impure the clothing, seats, cloths, etc., which are used by the subject, as being one with him. Listen to what follows :—

v. 13. Si sanatus fuerit qui hujusmodi sustinet passionem, numerabit septem dies post emun- dationem.	If he who has this disease is cured, he will count <i>seven days</i> after his liberation.
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v. 16. Vir de quo egredietur semen coïtus, lavabit aquâ corpus suum et immundus erit usque ad vesperum.	He who has a loss of seed will wash his whole body with water, and shall be deemed unclean <i>until evening</i> .
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The patient suffering from *mizobo*, then, had to wait *seven days after his cure* before he could mingle with others; while the man defined by the word *chighboth*, of verse 16, was declared impure until evening only. These are two very different cases: on the one hand, a contagious flow; on the other, a simple pollution. Besides, the Talmud completes our information on this point.

There is nothing here referable to syphilis; and



those authors who have copied their predecessors, one after the other, should have ceased to invoke this verse of Leviticus as soon as Ricord demonstrated that gonorrhœa was entirely independent of syphilis. To quote erroneously is to give arms to one's adversary; and we will not fail to reject, whenever we meet them, incorrect quotations of authors who are partisans of the ancient origin, whose zeal has obscured their sight. It is, perhaps, easier to compile than to look up proofs one's self and to discuss those found by others; but one is then liable to reproduce the errors and to publish texts which have not been understood.

Let us return to the Bible:—

The Hebrews were as much exposed as other peoples of Asia to contract venereal diseases, as they had the depraved habits of all the Asiatics. Without mentioning Sodom and Gomorrha, does not Moses forbid, in Leviticus, incest, bestiality, abnormal sexual relations, and even legal prostitution, which is the best proof that these vices existed? In spite of the most severe punishments, the Hebrews gave themselves up to these shameless excesses; and, as prostitution was forbidden in their camp, they visited strangers, particularly the Medianites and the daughters of Moab. These latter initiated them into the worship of Baal Peor, or Belphegor,—a sort of Priapus, whose temples were nothing but places of debauchery. These orgies in common were eminently favorable to the propagation of syphilis; and, as a matter of fact, it was rapidly propagated, and known as the *plague of Baal Peor*,—an epidemic which will arrest us a moment.

From the information furnished us by Rosenbaum,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Geschichte der Lustseuche in Alterthum. Halle, 1845. History of Syphilis in Antiquity.



the name "Baal Peor" signified among the Hebrews *the god Penis*, the Priapus of the Romans, of whom we shall have occasion to speak shortly. His temple was built on Mount Peor, and young girls repaired to it to prostitute themselves. This worship was analogous to that of the *Lingam* of India, and of the *Phallus* of the rest of Asia. We may still see to-day, in China, a phallus on a stone over the door of houses of prostitution [as it was in Pompeii]. Here are, according to the Old Testament, in the Book of Moses, which the Greeks have called the Pentateuch, the passages concerning the scourge which the Jews brought upon themselves by the worship of Baal (Numbers, chap. xxv):—

v. 1. Morabatur autem eo tempore Israël in Sittim, eo fornicatus est populus cum filiabus Moab.

However (after the exodus from Egypt), Israel had tarried at Sittim and inhabited there; it fell into fornication with the daughters of Moab.

In more symbolic terms, the Hebrews worshiped the gods of the daughters of the Moabites and devoted themselves to the worship of Baal Peor:—

v. 3. Initiatus est Israël Baal Peor.

Then the wrath of Jehovah made itself felt—always according to Moses—and manifested itself as an epidemic disease, which spread like a train of powder and decimated the Israelites. Moses, frightened, caused all those who had worshiped Baal to be killed; that is to say, all those who had had relations with the Moabite women; for they were all infected, or likely to be:—

v. 9. Et occisi sunt viginti quatuor millia hominum.

Twenty-four thousand men were thus killed by the steel.

A rather radical prophylaxis, but one of which Jehovah shouldered the entire responsibility. "In order



to appease my anger," he is made to say, "let each chief of the tribes sacrifice those of his tribe who have gone over to Baal Peor." Later on, the Bible adds: "Thus the plague was averted, after having cost the lives of 24,000 men." Many commentators of the Hebrew text have departed from this to explain that the 24,000 men died of the disease, which is contradicted by the text itself. Besides, Philon and Josephus, Jewish historians, expressly state that this massacre was ordered by Moses. This occurred in the supposed year of the creation of the world, 2553, in 1451 B.C.; that is to say, forty years after the exodus from Egypt. At all events, this terrible execution did not prove sufficient to destroy the root of the evil; for Joshua, seventeen years later, reproaching the Hebrews for their debauchery, plainly says<sup>1</sup>:—

v. 17. An parvum vobis est quod peccatis in Baal Peor, et usque in præsentem diem macula hujus sceleris in nobis permanet . . . ?

Is it not enough for you to have committed the sin of following the worship of Baal Peor, a sin whose *sign exists unto this day* . . . ?

Nearly seven centuries later, in 810 B.C., the prophet Hosea again had occasion to rail against those who sacrificed to the altars of Baal Peor, and groaned over the results of this worship<sup>2</sup>:—

v. 10. Intraverunt ad Baal Peor, . . . et facti abominabiles sicut ea quæ dilexerunt.

They have been initiated in the mysteries of Baal Peor, . . . and they have become terrible like those things which they worshiped.

And still Moses had taken his precautions well; for, not content with killing the guilty, he declared war against the Midianites—always according to the com-

<sup>1</sup> Joshua, chap. xxii.

<sup>2</sup> Hosea, chap. ix.



mands of Jehovah—because the women of that people had drawn the sons of Israel to the worship of Baal Peor. As a matter of fact, it was the principal focus of the scourge. The Hebrews marched against Prince Midian, defied him, killed all the men, and, after pillaging, *secundem artem*, brought back with the flocks the women and children. Moses became angered at the generals of the army because they had spared the women<sup>1</sup>:—

v. 15. Cur feminis reservatis.

As a matter of fact, it was scarcely worth while to have executed their own men, either diseased or suspected of being so, and then introduce in the midst of the Hebrew camp strange women who contained the virus. Moses had but one course to pursue,—kill them also. It was cruel, but logical. The great legislator proved that he was acquainted with logic before the birth of Aristotle. Let us listen to him:—

v. 16. Nonne istæ sunt quæ deceperunt filios Israëli ad suggestionem Balaam, et prævaricari vos fecerunt in Domino super peccato Peor unde percussus est populus?

Are these not the women who have seduced the sons of Israel at the instigation of Balaam, and who have made you deny the Lord, your God, to make you sacrifice to *Peor*, from whom is come the scourge which has stricken our people?

The conclusion of this appropriate apostrophe is easily anticipated:—

v. 17. Ergo interficite quidquid est generis masculini, etiam in parvulis; et mulieres quæ noverunt virus in coïtu, jugulate;

Therefore, kill all male children, even the newborn; and strangle the women who have known men carnally; but allow female children and young virgins to live.

v. 18. puellas autem et omnes feminas virgines reservate vobis.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers, chap. xxi.



This butchery, carried out, as we have said, 1451 years before our era, did not prevent the plague of Baal Peor from becoming one of the ornaments of our large capitals, after a lapse of more than thirty centuries. It is true that the sword of Moses is out of fashion, fortunately, and that in Paris, for example, the system of incarceration in St. Lazare is a very poor substitute. Treat them and cure them, but do not punish them. These patients are victims before necessity makes them criminals!

There is no doubt that the epidemic of which we have just been speaking was of venereal origin; for Flavius Josephus states that it was highly contagious, and was transmitted to different members of the same family,—no doubt, through toilet articles, vases, etc. Such, according to the Bible, is the legend of the disease of Baal Peor, of which several authors have spoken, chiefly Rosenbaum and Hamonic. We will here reproduce the conclusions of the latter, with which we fully agree<sup>1</sup>:—

“Do we ask what was the scourge of Baal Peor?

“We must, first of all, put aside leprosy. Moses knew its prognosis very well. He had it himself.<sup>2</sup>

“It was neither *gonorrhœa*, nor *balano-posthitis*, nor *genital herpes*, nor even *soft chancre*.

“These lesions, with the exception of the last, were frequent at that time, as I have pointed out in speaking of circumcision, and were, so to say, classical. They certainly would not have alarmed Moses to the pitch of adopting such a radical measure, even if they had multiplied, as a result of excessive coïtus and uncleanness. Besides, they would not have perpetuated themselves in Israel.

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Exodus, chap. iv, v. 6.



“The disease of Baal Peor was something more intense, more violent, and more dangerous for the public health; and, although the Bible does not furnish the clinical symptoms, it is plain that this disease constituted a grave social danger, which Moses endeavored to avoid by all possible means. *Certes* this legislator was too keen an observer of phenomena to make a gross error of diagnosis between diseases which already existed among his people and the new epidemic.

“The inevitable conclusion from what precedes is, that *the scourge of Baal Peor was syphilis.*”

Among the isolated verses which, outside of legendary or historical facts, deal with this affection, treat of this disease, a few are found in which *alopecia* is pointed out as a disease inherent to prostitution. Prostitutes and those who frequent them are to expect, according to the prophet Isaiah (785 B.C.), to see their skulls denuded and their bodies emanate a fetid odor<sup>1</sup>:—

v. 9. Agnitio vultûs eorum respondit eis : peccatum suum quasi Sodoma prædicaverunt, nec absconderunt. . . .

v. 17. . . . decalvabit Dominus verticem filiarum Sion, et Dominus crinem earum nudabit.

v. 24. Et erit pro suavi odore fœtor, . . . pro crispanti crine calvitium.

The appearance of their face speaks for them : like Sodom they publish their sin, nor do they dissimulate. . . .

. . . the Lord will render bald the vertex of the heads of the sons of Sion, the Lord will cause their *hair to fall*.

Instead of that pleasant perfume they will spread a stink, . . . instead of flowing hair, it will be *baldness*.

Was it the characteristic odor of vulvar syphilides? We do not know; it is possible, especially when we remember that this bad odor is coincident with *alopecia*.

In Deuteronomy, which is the second book of the

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah, chap. iii.



laws of Moses embraced in the Pentateuch, we see the legislator threatening his people with the *ulcer of Egypt* if they desert the Lord and refuse to hearken to his voice; that is to say, Moses himself, the forced intermediary (chapter xxviii):—

v. 17. Percutiat te Dominus ulcere Egypti, et partem corporis per quam stercora egrediuntur, scabie quoque et prurigne, ita ut curari nequeas.

The Lord will visit thee with the *ulcer of Egypt*, and that part of thy body by which the fæcal matters are evacuated will be the seat of itching *papules*, of which thou canst not free thyself.

So the Egyptian ulcer was accompanied by *folds*, *elevations* (scabies) about the *anus*, which caused the patient to experience tingling; and Moses knew that it took a long time to cure, at least. This description would apply very well to mucous patches of the anal region, without prejudice to the other manifestations alluded to in the verses which follow:—

v. 35. Percutiat te Dominus ulcere pessimo in genibus, in furis, sanarique non possis a planta pedis usque ad verticem tuum.

The Lord will cover thee with *bad ulcers* from the soles of the feet to the head, upon the knees, on the legs, and thou wilt not get well.

A generalized eruption with pustules and ulcerations. Let us continue:—

v. 59. Augebit Dominus plagas tuas et plagas seminis tui, plagas magnas et perseverantes infirmitates pessimas et perpetuas.

Thy sores will increase, by the will of God, as also those thou hast given to thy *progeny*; then they will be large and *persevering* sores, the worst and *most lasting* lesions.

Heredity is clearly indicated here, and it does not require a great stretch of the imagination to understand the medical meaning of these threats of Moses. Secondary accidents are numerous, succeed each other,



and are rebellious to the primitive treatment of the Hebrew; the children born in these circumstances have syphilitic manifestations. Then come tertiary lesions,—ulcers which do not heal, necroses, and irreparable losses of substance. If we imagined this summary description deprived of its sententious and symbolic dress, we would think that we were reading one of those monographs of the fifteenth century treating of the *morbis gallicus*. This passage of Deuteronomy is one of the most interesting, especially as it informs us that the Egyptian ulcer was syphilis. Moses gave out these laws 1451 B.C.; that is to say, in the year of the plague of Baal Peor. These appellations, devoted to dissimilar symptoms of the same disease,—symptoms whose nosological bonds could not be suspected by the Hebrews,—were necessarily numerous, either on account of the seat of the lesions, or on account of the endemic or epidemic character which the disease might assume.

We will now go back still further,—to Genesis, which is lost in the twilight of time,—and relate the different excursions of Abram, who judged it better, later on, to call himself Abraham.

About the year 1921 B.C., if we are to believe the Bible, a Hebrew of the name of Abram, who dwelt between Bethel and Aï, was constrained to leave his country by the famine: he went down to Egypt, but, as his wife Saraï was beautiful, he made her pass herself off as his sister, “fearing,” said he, “that the Egyptians might do him an evil turn by taking her from him.” The beauty of Saraï gained him admission to the court of Pharaoh. The latter simply appropriated the beautiful Jewess to himself, and heaped her supposed brother with goods and presents. But the Lord, less satisfied with this amicable arrangement than Abram,—so the Bible states,



—“visited Pharaoh and his house with *great plagues*, on account of Saraï, the wife of Abram.”<sup>1</sup>

v. 17. Flagellant autem Dominus Pharaonem plagis maximis et domum ejus, propter Saraï, uxorem Abram.

Which means that Pharaoh contracted from Saraï a venereal disease, which he transmitted to his other wives or to those of his officers, who gave it to others, etc. In short, the whole court was infected. Pharaoh, “like a true gentleman,” as Hamonic says, after having reproached Abram for not having informed him that she was his wife, returned his goods to him, together with his dangerous mate, and dismissed him.

Later on, at Guerar, this accommodating husband played the same trick upon Abimelech, the king of that country. At that time he called himself Abraham and his wife Sarah. Same story of the sister, and the same foreseen taking away. But the Lord appeared to the king in a vision, and threatened him with death. Let us note, by the way, that the Lord was very indulgent with Abraham, and very severe to the kings who fell in the trap. M. de Montespan exhibited more pride than the Israelite patriarch; but divine wrath, no doubt, exhausted after thirty-five centuries of useless threats, or blunted by use, in no way troubled Louis XIV in the course of his adulterous exploits. Abimelech hastened to return Sarah to her husband, and loaded both with presents. He had, none the less, contracted the disease, which he transmitted to the queen and to his sewing-maids or concubines. But upon the prayer of Abraham—who could do no less for such a generous client—the Lord *cured* Abimelech, his wife and servants, and these could *bear children*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, chap. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis, chap. xx.



v. 17. Orante autem Abraham sanavit Deus et uxorem, ancillasque ejus, et pepererunt.

v. 18. Concluserat enim Dominus omnem vulvam domus Abimelech propter Saram, uxorem Abraham.

For the Lord *closed the womb* of all the women of the house of Abimelech on account of Sarah, the wife of Abraham.

This Sarah, while a source of profit to Abraham, was a danger to all those who allowed themselves to be captivated by her charms. Besides, the Bible informs us that she was for a long time sterile, and that all the women who were infected through her were also sterile. We will conclude, like Hamonic:—

“The disease transmitted by Sarah was always of genital origin.

“On account of its great transmissibility, its long period of virulence, and the relations which seemed to exist between it and sterility, it is not irrational to suppose that *syphilis* was concerned in this. It disappeared with age in Sarah, who became pregnant late, which is a good proof that her sterility was not due to an organic cause.

“Outside of syphilis, we cannot see any other disease of genital origin which could correspond with the foregoing facts.”

This manner of interpreting the disease of Sarah is not new, although it is not expressed, as far as we know, by any author defending the antiquity of syphilis until 1887. A Spanish physician, a contemporary of the great epidemic of the fifteenth century, Francisco de Villalobos, wrote, in his youth (thirty-two years before Fracastor), a poem on syphilis, in which he relates in light verses that Pharaoh caught this disease from Sarah. This Villalobos became celebrated later on, and was successively physician to Ferdinand V, Charles V, and



Philip II. This is the passage: "On account of this sin," says Holy Writ, "King Pharaoh was attacked by it (the pox), because he could not resist the great beauty of Sarah." . . .

Por este pecado en la sacra escritura,  
Al rey Faraon le hallamos tenella,  
Porque él fué vencido de gran hermosura  
De Sarra . . . <sup>1</sup>

In order to conclude with the Bible, we will examine the case of King David,—*Daoud*, according to the Hebrew text. Everybody knows his adventure with Bath-Sheba, that which our abridged sacred histories call Bethsabee; it may be seen, in these same abridgements, that David was punished:—

Pleura quelque temps son péché,  
Mais garda toujours sa maîtresse. <sup>2</sup>

We will summarize, in a few lines, this authentic history, which proves that David, made king because he was a son-in-law, acted like a common assassin, and in a particularly disreputable manner. The syphilis which he reaped, to begin with, as we shall see, was really but a slight punishment, compared to the crime he committed. Pharaoh and Abimelech, more righteous, and certainly less cruel, were punished in the same manner, and yet Abraham was far from being as interesting as Uriah.

King David, the Bible relates, was enjoying the cool of the evening upon the terrace of his palace, when he saw a woman of rare beauty, who was washing herself in the brook. He made inquiries, and learned that she was the wife of one of his officers, one Uriah; he had

<sup>1</sup> Villalobos: Sumario de la medecina, en romance trovado, con un tratado sobre las pestiferas bubas. Salamanca, 1498. Summary of Medicine, in verse, with a Treatise on the Bubonic Plague.

<sup>2</sup> "Wept some time for his sin, but always kept his mistress." Parny: Les Galantries de la Bible. Paris, 1831. The Galantries of the Bible.



her brought to him, said very little to her, and found her docile in every respect. The entertainment having terminated, Bath-Sheba very quietly returned home. It is not known whether she returned often to see the king, but it is probable; at all events, she became pregnant. Then David bethought him of getting rid of the husband, and found nothing better than to charge one of his generals, who was on a campaign, to place him in the most dangerous post, so that he might be killed,—which happened, as a matter of fact. A convenient method, in no way compromising, but not chivalric. Louis XV acted differently in respect to the gentlemen of his court, whose conjugal honor he damaged, if it was only *before the letter*. Other times, other manners. •

Bath-Sheba put on mourning, and David married her. She was delivered. Up to that time, nothing was more simple. But our two lovers had reckoned without the Lord, who, having had enough time to think, declared himself angry, and sent, always according to the legend, a prophet to David, to rail at him and warn him that he would be punished where he had sinned. It is probable that tertiary accidents rapidly declared themselves in this lecherous king; besides, he may not have troubled himself about the two first periods; he may have had them in a light form, and, as he did not treat himself from the beginning, nine or ten months later, at the least,—since Bath-Sheba had time to arrive at term,—the symptoms of the tertiary period manifested themselves with a certain intensity: osteocopic pains, ulcerated gummata, and the rest. Nothing but what is very rational in the progress of the disease. But let us not anticipate our conclusions, and let us leave the Bible speak. The prophet Nathan brings to David the decision of Jehovah<sup>1</sup>:—

<sup>1</sup> Kings, chap. xii.



v. 11. Itaque hæc dicit Dominus : ecce ego suscitabos super te malum de domo tuâ. . . .

v. 14. . . . filius qui natus est tibi, morte morietur.

For the Lord has spoken thus : Behold, I will visit *evil* upon thee and upon thy house, . . . .  
. . . . the son who is born to thee will die.

As a matter of fact, in spite of David praying to the Lord, fasting, lying upon the ground, etc., the child fell ill, and "died at the end of seven days."

v. 18. Accidit autem die septimâ ut moreretur infans.

This occurred 1034 B.C. Let us now listen to the lamentations of David, who will himself describe, with poetical metaphors, the symptoms of his disease (*Psalms*).

Chap. vi, v. 3. Miserere mei, Domine, quoniam infirmus sum : sana me, Domine, quoniam conturbata sunt ossa mea. . . .

v. 8. Inveteravi. . . .

Chap. xxi, v. 7. Ego autem sum vermis, et non homo ; opprobrium hominum. . . .

v. 8. Omnes videntes me, deriserunt me. . . .

Pity me, O Lord, for I am ill : cure me, O Lord, for *my bones are diseased*. . . .

I am become old. . . .

I am a *worm*, and not a man : I am the opprobrium of men. . . .

All those who have seen me have mocked me. . . .

David would have been pitied, instead of being mocked, if the origin and nature of his disease had not been known.

v. 15. Et dispersa sunt omnia ossa mea. . . .

v. 16. Aruit tanquam testa virtus mea, et lingua mea adhæsit faucibus meis. . . .

Chap. xxx, v. 11. Ossa mea conturbata sunt.

v. 12. . . . Sum opprobrium, . . . qui videbant forâs, fugerunt a me. . . .

All my *bones separate*.

All my strength dries up like clay, and my tongue cleaves to my palate. . . .

My bones are diseased.

I am an opprobrium, . . . all those who have seen me abroad have run away from me. . . .

No one wished to come near him ; it must have been known that his disease was contagious.



Chap. xxxi, v. 3. Inveteraverunt ossea mea. . . .	My bones have become old. . . . .
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He recurs three times to the state of his bones; the bony frame was, without doubt, affected the most.

v. 4. Die ac nocte gravata est super me manus tua. . . .	Day and night thy hand weighs upon me. . . .
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This was probably a nocturnal cephalalgia, as he did not even have sleep to forget his trouble.

Chap. xxxviii, v. 4. Non est sanitas in carne mea a facie iræ tuæ: non est pax ossibus meis a facie peccatorum meorum.	There is nothing sound in my flesh on account of thy wrath: my bones leave me no peace on account of my sins [transgres- sions (?)].
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His bones always made him suffer; they were most probably osteocopic. This opinion is shared in by Galigo,<sup>1</sup> who says, in the beginning of his work, that "King David seems to have been the subject of syphilis, and to have suffered chiefly from *osteocopic pains* (*il Re David sembra che sia andato soggetto alla sifilide, e perfino ai dolori osteocopi*)."

v. 6. Putruerunt et corruptæ sunt cicatrices meæ a facie in- sipientiæ meæ. . . .	My ulcers are putrid and cor- rupt on account of my folly. . .
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Ulcerated gummata, evidently treated in a primitive manner.

v. 8. Non est sanitas in carne meâ. . . .	There is nothing healthy in my flesh. . . .
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He is forced to acknowledge a second time that he is not healthy. At that time the famous *alteratives*, vaunted with so much advertising to-day, were unknown.

v. 11. . . . et lumen ocu- lorum meorum et ipsum non est mecum.	. . . and the light of my eyes is no more with me.
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<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*



Have we to deal with iritis, a common accident of the transition period?

v. 12. Qui juxta me erant, de longè steterunt.	Those who were near me now stand aloof.
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For the second time he makes us understand that his disease had a contagious character, which was well known, as nobody trusted it. Finally, David beseeches the Lord to heal him completely. He doubtless knew that his disease could disappear without leaving any traces:—

Chap. 1, v. 9. Asperges me hys- sopo, et mundabor . . . et super nivem dealdabor.	You will sprinkle me with hys- sop and I will be purified . . . and I will become whiter than the snow.
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This last phrase leads us involuntarily to think of the syphilitics of our century who, knowing that it takes several years to effect a complete cure, ask us to *bleach* them in the shortest possible time.

“Although somewhat vague,” says Hamonic, “the symptoms mentioned in the Psalms of David have none the less a great value, especially if they are grouped and placed in relation to each other. Here is a man who contracted from a woman he rendered pregnant a disease of genital origin, whose symptoms are marked, since they are those upon which the patient especially insists, consisting in terrible *pains*, coming on chiefly at night, and in *alterations of the bones*. The bones are the seat of acute suffering. They disintegrate, *separate* (caries or necrosis). Purulent and chronic ulcers occur, and are probably related to the diseased bones. It must be through them that the fragments of bone escape.

“The patient loses his strength, and falls into a marked cachexia. His emaciation is extreme. His



mouth (especially the tongue) is diseased. He is a disgusting object to everybody. The morbid symptoms, at first localized, become more and more general ("there is nothing healthy in my flesh"), and, what caps the climax, the eyes are implicated and the sight is obscured. Visceral symptoms appear at a given time, and this *terrible general disease* plunges the unfortunate David in a hypochondria and discouragement which it is easy to understand, in view of the chronicity of the lesions and of their resistance to the simple therapeutics directed against them.

"To what has preceded, let us add that the child borne by Bath-Sheba, who had transmitted her disease to David, died at the end of seven days,—a fact which, when added to the others, naturally leads us to make the diagnosis of syphilis. So I will conclude by saying that David, who, in his old age, required a young virgin to warm him,<sup>1</sup> is probably one of the most ancient *syphilitic* kings who ever lived."

We see nothing to add to the conclusions, which are a faithful reproduction of our way of seeing. We will merely say that, if syphilis is a just punishment, which is a debatable question, it was never, nor could it have been, better applied than in being grafted on the venerable David.

Let us now say a few words concerning the disease of Job. A certain number of authors, physicians, and others, such as Vatable, Cyprian, the Jesuit Jean de Piedo (or Pineda), the Capuchin monk Bolbuc (or Bolduc), Don Calmet, Ulrich von Hutten, Guy Patin, etc., saw syphilis in his disease; for others, it was leprosy. Hamonic, who is in accord with Bartholin and M. Rollet, holds it for scurvy. They base themselves upon the

<sup>1</sup> Kings, chap. iii, v. 1, 2, 3, 4.



fact that Lot had many children after his cure, and that his daughters were very beautiful. This is not an absolute reason, for all practitioners have had the opportunity of delivering syphilitic women, who were cured, and whose children have always remained handsome.<sup>1</sup> In addition, we will humbly observe that scurvy requires for its development physiological poverty, which is found everywhere; in the next place, the conditions of moisture, and especially of cold, are not present in all countries. It is plain that cold does not easily occur in Palestine.

At all events, the symptoms described by Job differ from those presented by David; and, with the exception of a few symptoms which are found in several diseases, and particularly in syphilis, we do not think that the story of Job presents arguments sufficient to permit this unfortunate man being dubbed the *patron of the poxy*.

Certain authors, M. Rollet, for instance, have seen syphilis in the sixth plague of Egypt (Exodus, chap. ix, v. 10 and 11). It is not impossible, but the Bible simply states that *ulcers* and *vesicular* (or pustular) *tumors* formed in men and in animals. This is very obscure, and we know that syphilis has never manifested itself in animals beyond the attempts at inoculation which succeeded. There was to be seen, in 1882, in the anteroom of the internes of Lourcine, a young monkey whom Martineau, our former teacher, had inoculated with syphilis, and who exhibited, for several months, very distinct mucous patches.

As to the *leprosy* of the Hebrews, a number of skin diseases may be recognized under this term, and it cor-

<sup>1</sup> We will return to this subject in our next volume, and adduce very convincing cases.



responds, in a great measure, to our expression *dartre* [tetter]. The leprosy of the Middle Ages was nothing else; to see in it true leprosy only, as we know it, or syphilis alone, is to be too exclusive. Many patients affected with benign or malignant affections of the skin, and occasionally syphilitics, were called lepers. We will soon see what part is to be assigned to leprosy proper, which became a pathological curiosity as soon as syphilis, rescued from the chaos in which it had been buried up to the end of the fifteenth century, occupied the place which properly belonged to it in nosology.

In the disease of Herod, in which there existed suppurating buboes and gangrene of the genital organs, like Apion the Blasphemer, if we are to believe Flavius Josephus,<sup>1</sup> the Jewish historian and writer, scarcely anything but a large phagedenic chancre can be seen. We will say the same of the case of the Emperor Galerius Maximus, related by Eusebius.<sup>2</sup> They might be regarded as ulcers of the tertiary period, but these are not, as a rule, complicated by gangrene. We are also aware of the fact that Ricord has described gangrenous syphilitic chancres; but such cases are extremely rare, as due to the syphilis itself; so rare that one is led to suspect some influence extraneous to the specific disease, and to give them their true name, perhaps,—that of mixed chancres. But we have already stated (chap. i) our opinion upon this subject, and this is not the place to enter upon a discussion which might lead us too far. We will close this study of syphilis in Biblical times by reproducing a few passages from a letter of Guy

<sup>1</sup> Flavius Josephus : *Antiquitat judaic.*, lib. xvii, chap. viii (translated from the Greek).

<sup>2</sup> *Histor. Ecclesiast.*, lib. viii, chap. xxviii (translated from the Greek into Latin).



Patin,—curious remains of the seventeenth century,—which we quote on account of its originality<sup>1</sup>:—

*Lettre 370. A Monsieur F. C. M. D. R.*<sup>2</sup>

Pour répondre à ce que vous me demandez, je vous dirai que Bolduc, Capucin, a écrit aussi bien que Pineda, Jesuite Espagnol, que Job avoit la vérole. Je croirois volontiers que David et Salomon l'avoient aussi. . . . M. Gaffendy m'a dit que la lèpre, dans la Bible, étoit la vérole. *Luis venereæ causa est scortatio turpis, vaga, promiscua, atque talis scortatio est ab omni ævo.* Ce serpent, dans la Genèse, disoit un libertin, étoit quelque jeune Dameret qui donna la vérole à Eve, et voilà le péché originel de nos Moines, ce nous disoit M. de Malherbe. Au moins est-ce chose certaine que la grosse vérole étoit bien fort connuë dans l'Europe devant que Charles VIII allât à la conquête du Royaume de Naples. . . .

De Paris, le 18 Septembre, 1665.

<sup>1</sup> Guy Patin : Nouveau recueil de lettres choisies. Rotterdam, 1725. New Collection of Selected Letters.

<sup>2</sup> Letter 370. To M. F. C. D. R.:—

In answer to your inquiry, I will state that Balduc, the Capuchin, has written, as well as Pineda, a Spanish Jesuit, that Job had the pox. I would willingly believe that David and Solomon also had it. . . . M. Gaffandey has told me that the leprosy in the Bible was the pox. *The cause of the venereal disease is a shameless libertinage, indulged in any where or with any one, and this prostitution has existed from all antiquity.* The serpent, in Genesis, said a libertine, was some young Lovelace who gave Eve the pox, and this is the original sin of our monks, M. Malherbe used to tell us. At least, it is certain that the big pox was very well known in Europe before Charles VIII went to the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples. . . .

From Paris, September 18, 1665.



## CHAPTER IX.

### UPADANSA.

#### SYPHILIS AMONG THE HINDOOS ONE THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

“Un des plus anciens foyers de la syphilis est très probablement l'Inde, c'est-à-dire le pays qui a été le berceau du genre humain.”—ROLLET.<sup>1</sup>

[One of the oldest foci of syphilis is most probably India ; that is to say, the country which was the cradle of mankind.]

“Il est évident que le vocable *upadansa* désigne, en sanscrit, le *virus syphilitique* : tout le démontre, non seulement la description de la maladie, mais aussi les moyens thérapeutiques employés.”<sup>2</sup>—HESSLER. (Latin translation of the *Ayurveda* : Notes on chapter xii of the *Pathology*.)

[It is very evident that the word *upadansa* designates, in Sanskrit, the *syphilitic virus* : everything shows this, not only the description of the disease, but also the therapeutic measures employed.]

THE origin of the documents, which are derived from antiquity on Asia in general, and India in particular, are of two kinds,—secular legends and Sanskrit literature. We will first examine the marvelous, to find, among the allegories, that which is referable to syphilis ; then we will seek it in the Vedas,—a collection at once religious, literary, and scientific.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dict. Encyclop. des sc. médic., article Syphilis.

<sup>2</sup> “Sanskritæ voci *upadansa* vim luis venereæ subjectum esse, non solum ex his allatis morbi causis, sed etiam ex hujus morbi curandi ratione cernitur.” The expression *vim luis venereæ* means, literally, *the strength of venereal disease*. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Latin expression which replaced that of *morbis gallicus* was *lues venerea*. In their writings, the authors of the sixteenth century who wrote in French call syphilis currently “la lues” [the lues]. For this reason, we believe that we have interpreted Hessler's idea exactly, by translating *vim luis venereæ* by *syphilitic virus*.

<sup>3</sup> This chapter should follow that which treats of prehistoric syphilis, as everyone is agreed in recognizing that India is the cradle of the human race, but we follow the chronological order of the written documents.



The Hebrews had the worship of Baal Peor; the Hindoos that of Lingam, based upon the same principles and including the same mysteries. A part of Chaldea, prostitution reigned like a mistress in all Asia; Babylon, the capital of Chaldea, then was the cradle of prostitution, and, consequently, of syphilis, its forced companion. Dufour, who has written the history of prostitution with much talent and learning, remarks that "this subject, at once delicate and questionable, connects itself on all sides with the history of religions, of laws, and of customs."<sup>1</sup> There are three forms which correspond to the three great periods of history: (1) hospitable prostitution, (2) religious prostitution, (3) legal or political prostitution. These details, which might, at first, appear tedious, are, nevertheless, of the greatest importance; for they will enable the reader to appreciate how venereal diseases could arise at a time when patriarchal customs existed, and to follow, step by step, the development and invading march of these diseases from the East to the West.

*Legal prostitution* is the traffic in charms deprecated by M. Prudhomme,<sup>2</sup> but authorized by the police and regulated by legal measures; it is the necessary evil, the safety-valve which protects the wife and daughters of even M. Prudhomme against bold attacks.

By the term *hospitable prostitution* must be understood that custom of the primitive peoples of Asia which consisted in putting a guest in the host's place, not only at table, but even in the latter's bed, and resigning to him his wife, according to the laws of hospitality.

<sup>1</sup> Dufour: Histoire de la prostitution chez tous les peuples du monde depuis l'antiquité la plus reculée jusqu'à nos jours. Paris, 1851. History of Prostitution among All Peoples of the World, from the Remotest Antiquity up to the Present Day.


<sup>2</sup> A character somewhat similar to the English Mrs. Grundy.



In this respect, Scotland was outdone ; but it must be added that custom required the traveler to give a present to the wife of his host when he departed from the family, which he had sometimes helped to increase. There is no necessity of dwelling any further upon this ; it can be easily understood with what facility contagious diseases of the genital organs could be transmitted, especially if the travelers made frequent stops.

By *religious prostitution* we are to understand the secret practices of the worship of the Lingam, of Baal, and later of Venus and of Priapus. At a still more remote period, it was not only the celebration of certain mysteries varying with the temples, but custom, which required young girls to offer their virginity to the divinity ; and, as the idol could not descend from its pedestal, it accepted the gift by proxy. Imagine the officiating priest, subject to syphilis, and draw your own conclusions. It can also be seen, by the following passage, that there existed, in the Oriental manners of primitive times, other customs extremely favorable to the propagation of venereal diseases : “ Among the ancient peoples of Asia,” says Rosenbaum,<sup>1</sup> “ the first fruits of everything had to be consecrated to the divinity ; as a consequence, the virginity of women belonged to Venus. . . . In antiquity, like to-day among several savage nations, the menstrual blood, like that which flows as the result of defloration through the rupture of the hymen, and the act itself, were considered unclean. . . . The dwellers on the coast, who had more frequent relations with strangers, abandoned the act of defloration to the latter ; in the interior, priests discharged this task for the people of quality.”

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*





A remains of this custom may be seen in that well-known custom of feudal times known as the *droit du Seigneur*. According to Sonnerat,<sup>1</sup> the King of Calicut rewards his principal priest with five hundred ducats to "loosen the girdle" of his wives in the name of the divinity. This fact is confirmed by an English writer, Hamilton, in his "New Account of the East Indies." The same Sonnerat relates an Indian belief in regard to the worship of Siva, Brahma, and Vishnu, which is extremely interesting because it demonstrates that the origin of venereal diseases in India is lost in the darkness of ages. This is the legend, in brief:—

Penitents of the worship of Lingam, incensed against Siva for having obtained favors from their wives, made a terrible sacrifice directed against him. We must believe that it was very empyreumatic, for he overturned the whole Heaven of Vishnu, and, says the author, "the god himself could not bear it. It was like a *fire* which attacked the *generative parts* of Siva and separated them from his body." The god avenged himself by giving this disease to the women in such a manner as to "set the whole world on *fire*."<sup>2</sup>

This revenge is logical; but if the genital parts of Siva had fallen off, how did the god give his disease, unless it was by means of a lancet? However, legends

<sup>1</sup> Voyage aux Indes orientales et à la Chine, 1774. Journey to the East Indies and to China.

<sup>2</sup> There is a certain analogy between the maleficence of the Hindoo penitents and the Borbonessa tart of Panurge: this relates to a joke played against the theologians. "He made a Borbonessa tart (or filthy and slovenly compound), made of store of garlick, of asafoetida, of castoreum, of . . . which he steeped, tempered, and liquefied in the corrupt matter of pocky boils and pestiferous botches; and, very early in the morning, therewith anointed all the pavement in such sort that the devil could not have endured it, . . . and ten or twelve of them died of the plague, . . . and above seven and twenty had the *pox*. . . Rabelais: Pantagrenal, lib. ii, cap. xvi. Urquhart's trans., 1854.



are not so precise; the thing to bear in mind is the disease. Fortunately, continues the fable, Brahma and Vishnu stopped the conflagration, by persuading their colleague, Siva, to discontinue his inoculations. Siva permitted himself to be persuaded, on condition that men would render divine honors to his genital organs, which, in all probability, had grown back in their proper place. Rosenbaum is of the opinion that this *fire*, this contagious disease, was syphilis; it seems very probable. In the same way, the worship which limited its ravages must certainly have consisted in hygienic care and a little more continence on the part of the stricken people.

Such is the information furnished us by popular beliefs; it is the naked fact. Let us now examine the literary works, in which we shall find details given with more or less scientific precision.

The ancient books of India which have come to us are called the Vedas.<sup>1</sup> The Vedas, the Bible of the Hindoos, contain: some, secular poetry; others, historical facts, precepts, religious traditions, etc. One only is exclusively devoted to medicine; it is really a treatise upon medicine which Dr. Hessler, of Erlangen, has translated into Latin.<sup>2</sup> This book, the Ayurveda, contains several curious passages which we will examine.

Its title is: *AYURVEDA. Medical Precepts of the venerable D'Hanvantari, collated by his disciple Susruta.* According to Liétard,<sup>3</sup> this D'Hanvantari was the Indian

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Baudry (Fred.): *Etude sur les Védas.* Paris, 1855. Study of the Vedas. Royle: *An Essay on the Antiquity of the Hindoo Medicine.* . . . London, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> *Ayurvedas, id est medicinæ Systema a venerabili D'Hanvantare demonstratum, a Susruta discipulo compositum.* . . . Erlangæ, 1844-1850.

<sup>3</sup> *Lettres historiques sur la médecine chez les Hindous.* Paris, 1863. *Historical Letters on Medicine Among the Hindoos.*



god of medicine, an analogous being to the Greek centaur, Chiron. This author traces the origin of the Ayurveda to the beginning of our era. Hessler does not share this opinion; he assigns the appearance of this book to a more remote period, although he acknowledges that it would be difficult to name the exact year. At all events, he gives good reasons to support his opinion. It is mentioned in the Ayurveda, in several places, that Susruta is the son of King Visvamitra, whom the Rigveda mentions; and it is proven by old Hindoo traditions that Visvamitra lived at a very remote period of the heroic age of India. The heroic age of India comprises a very long period, "and," says Hessler, "the beginning of this period is lost in the immensity of time; but we know that it ended about one thousand years B.C."<sup>1</sup> Hessler is forced to conclude that the Ayurveda dates back at least three thousand years, for, adds he, "the name Susruta was celebrated among the Hindoos many centuries before our era. This much can be proven."<sup>2</sup> In conclusion, let us say that the Ayurveda forms part of the *At'harvaveda*, whose antiquity is undoubted. But as a few years more or less before Christ make but little difference in a question of antiquity, let us dismiss this matter of the origin, and let us analyze those portions of the Ayurveda which treat of diseases of the genital organs. To render an understanding of the text more easy, we will, as in the verses of the Bible, place the Latin and the translation in parallel columns, adding comments whenever they may be deemed necessary.

Under the heading, *Sutrast'hana* (matters in general),

<sup>1</sup> "Incipit enim illud ævum inde ab infinito temporis spatio et usque ad annum circiter millesimum ante Christum natum procedit."

<sup>2</sup> "Susruta nomen apud Hindos floruisse multis jam sæculis ante nostram æram; quæ conclusio certe potest probari."



we find in Chapter XXI, which treats of ulcers, the following sentences :—

Sic irritati humores morbos generant. Abdomen aggressi, urinæ difficultates, . . . gonorrhæam; penem aggressi, per-versam expansionem, morbos venereos, seminis virilis vitia et ceteros morbos. . . .

Thus the irritated humors produce diseases. Attacking the abdomen (they produce) difficulty in urinating, . . . gonorrhœa; attacking the *penis*, they produce functional troubles of that organ, *venereal diseases*, alteration of the semen, and other diseases. . . .

The text is precise: it distinguishes gonorrhœa and urinary troubles from venereal diseases, and the title indicates that all terminate by ulcerating.

. . . anum aggressi, fistulas; hæmorrhoides et ceteros morbos; testiculos aggressi, intumescen-tias. . . .

. . . if it is at the anus, fis-tulas, hæmorrhoids, and *other affections*; if it is the *testicles*, it will be *tumors*. . . .

This passage is too indefinite, and nothing conclusive can be derived from it; but it occurs in connection with the following one :—

. . . telam cellulosa[m] ag-gressi, tubercula tumores, insen-sibiles intumescen-tias, colli glan-darum tumores, ophthalmias et ceteros. . . .

. . . if it is the cellular tis-sue, there are produced tubercles, *tumors*, *painless swellings*, *cervical ganglia*, *ophthalmias*, etc. . . .

Here are humors that are inclined to travel, and one would not have to be tempted much to find in this paragraph a collection of lesions which could be summarized as follows: Gonorrhœa, cystitis; fistulas, tumors at the anus, orchitis (gonorrhœal, tubercular, or syphilitic epididymitis), gummata of the skin; indolent ganglia, at the neck and elsewhere, conjunctivitis, iritis, etc. The paragraph terminates by a summary description of manifestations involving the skin, the *muscles*, the *bones*, and



the *feet*, which does not tend to exclude the idea of syphilis.

We will now pass on to the most important part, entitled, *Nidanast'hana*,—that is to say, *Pathology*,—in which diseases are described separately. Let us first examine Chapter II, which treats of the *pathology of hæmorrhoids*. As may be seen, the word which Hessler translates *hæmorrhoids* means, rather, excrescences, dry or moist tumors; for the Hindoo author finds them in all portions of the body. He begins by explaining that they are caused either by bad nutrition (*perversis alimentis*) or by contact with women in the sexual act (*cum mulieribus coitione*), etc.; and that which proves, better than all the reasoning in the world, that it was not ordinary hæmorrhoids, so well known to the constipated, is the fact that Susruta describes them as occurring upon the penis, the scrotum, and vulva, after the following manner:—

Humorum vitia penem aggressa, carnem et sanguinem vitianda, prurimum generant; illic ob prurimum ulcus oritur; in hoc ulcere carunculæ, a vitiata carne ortæ, purulento sanguine fluentes, oriuntur ad pubem, in medio aut superne. . . .

When the corrupt humors attack the *penis*, they *vitate* the flesh and the blood, and produce itching; from this itching there springs an *ulcer*; in this ulcer come *excrescences* due to the poisoned flesh, and flowing a *sanious pus*. These products are found at the *pubis*, either above or below the middle. . . .

It is impossible to recognize either simple or phagedenic chancres from this description; the latter, as we know, destroying more or less, with or without burrowing under the skin, but never accompanied by *excrescences* with sanious suppuration; what characterizes them, however, is loss of substance. But let us continue:—



. . . testes et vulvam aggressa, mollia, male olentia purulento sanguine fluentia et fungosa excrescentia generant. Hæc sursum profecta, in auribus, oculis, naso, et ore hæmorrhoides producunt; . . . in ore, gutture, labiis aut palatio. . . .

. . . if the *testicles* and *vulva* be attacked, there are produced fungous *excrescences*, soft, *smelling badly*, and running purulent blood. If these be in the *upper portions*, they produce hæmorrhoids in the *ears, eyes, nose, and mouth*; . . . in the mouth, the *throat*, on the *lips* and *palate*. . . .

Does this not read like a condensation of the symptoms of the secondary period? What are these *corrupt humors*, if not a virus which takes its point of departure from the penis, where it first manifests itself as a *local itching*? There is scratching, then an ulcer (infecting chancre); then, at the same place, more or less elevated mucous patches. From that time, papulo-hypertrophic syphilides appear upon the pubic region or upon the integument of the scrotum. If it be in a woman, these same syphilides occur preferably at the vulva, where they are juxtaposed and symmetrical; a fetid ichor escapes, the same occurring in the scrotal syphilides of men, where there is also juxtaposition. Let us call attention to the fact that the author, who had observed that the syphilides at the pubis were almost dry, does not state that they have a bad odor. So much for the genital region. We shall now see the disease, which has become constitutional, occurring in the cephalic region. We find external otitis, mucous patches of the nostrils, of the lips, of the mouth, and of the palate; syphilitic angina; and, later, tertiary lesions, probably included in the lesions of the nose and palate by the author, for he refers at two different times to the affections of the mouth. M. Proust, who has written an interesting article on syphilis in the



“*Traité de pathologie externe*”<sup>1</sup> of Follin, would, perhaps, have done better to analyze this chapter of the *Nidanast’hana*, rather than confine himself to a passage from the *Chikitsitast’hana* (therapeutics) in regard to the suppurating bubo, which furnished him with no argument in support of the view he was endeavoring to defend.

We believe it useless to demonstrate to the reader, who has read what precedes, that the word *hæmorrhoides* is to be translated by the phrase: *enlargements of the form of hæmorrhoids*. At all events, we will state that this was the opinion of the translator of the Ayurveda, for we find the following note respecting the extracts from the second chapter, which we have just given. “There is no doubt that the symptoms described in these two passages are much rather to be looked upon as connected with *venereal* diseases and *syphilitic* ulcers than with hæmorrhoids.”<sup>2</sup>

We will observe similarly in regard to Chapter V, which treats of *leprosy*, according to the title. As we have already remarked in regard to the Hebrews, this word was an indefinite term, very convenient to designate a group of morbid manifestations observed by the ancients, but which they did not know to what they could attach them. The key-stone of this pathological arch was missing; and this key-stone was the virus which they but dimly perceived. However, the reader may judge, from the text, if the symptoms described are to be solely ascribed to a disease of the skin and to external diseases:—

<sup>1</sup> Paris, 1874. Treatise on Surgical Pathology.

<sup>2</sup> “*Duobus, in his locis haud est dubium, quin morbosa symptomata describantur, quæ magis ad morbos venereos et ulcera syphilitica, quam ad hæmorrhoides pertinere videantur.*”



Nasi devastatio, oculorum pigmentum, in ulcere vermium ortus fieri potest et vocis suppressio in lepris ossa et medullam aggressis.

Quæ feminarum et marium, lepræ vitio in sanguine et semine virili vitiatorum, progenies ab ipsis orta est, ea etiam cognoscenda est leprosa.

According to many authors, true leprosy is not hereditary; according to others, it is hereditary, but not contagious. Without entering into an interminable discussion, we will limit ourselves to showing, in the following passage, that the heredity of the disease is distinctly shown:—

A Brahmæ uxoris vigiliarum cæde, securi capturis, et cet., facinoribus dicunt lepræ, peccato et morbo præditæ, originem.

The *destruction* of the *nose*, the spots of the eyes, the worms which arise here in *ulcers*, the *loss of voice*, are found in leprosy which has attacked the *bones* and the marrow.

When men and women are contaminated, and the virus of leprosy has affected the *blood* and changed the *virile seed*, their *progeny* is also *affected* by this disease.

It is said that leprosy, a *disease* and *sign* of sin, owes its origin to the horrible nocturnal mysteries of the wife of Brahma, to the shameless commerce and other acts deserving the axe.

The point to remember in this legend is that the disease originates in the bosom of debauchery; but what Latin! The sentence is almost a puzzle.

Copulatione, corporis contactu, . . . communi cubitu, . . . dæmoniâci morbi ab homine ad hominem transgrediuntur.

*Copulation, contact of the body, . . . the same bed, . . .* such are the causes which have caused these diabolical evils to pass from one man to another.

This abundantly proves that the disease was contagious. The Sanskrit word which Hessler has translated "lepræ" is *Kakanacæ*.

In Chapter XII the author states that he will consider, among other things, swellings of the testicle and then venereal diseases. Then begins a sentence which



is very obscure, and of which we will only give a few selections, with their literal translation<sup>1</sup>:—

Deinceps, post nimium coitum aut nimiam castimoniam (*brahmacharya*), porro post viri, feminem castam (*bramahcharini*), diu desertam, menstruantem, . . . vulva impuris aquis elotâ aut ilotâ præditam, vulvæ morbis affectam, sponte corruptâ vulvâ præditam aut orbatam ultra modum venerantis, . . . in coitûs fine . . . penem aggressa irritata humorum vitia, in vulnerato aut non vulnerato homine, tumorem procreant, quem morbum venereum appellant.

Then, after excessive intercourse, or a too great continence, long after, one may have to do with a chaste woman, who has not had sexual relations for a long time, and who has her courses, . . . whose vulva may or may not be bathed in *unhealthy secretions*, or become the seat of disease; if this man use excess with the woman, whether her vulva has or has not suddenly become a *focus of corruption*, . . . the unhealthy humors engendered at the end of coitus . . . may attack the penis, and, whether the man be excoriated or not, they bring forth a *pimple* which is called the *venereal disease*.

And we have omitted the useless details of this diffuse sentence! The ancient Hindoos had then noticed that the venereal swellings, which they called *upadansa*, in a general way, were found in persons addicted to sexual excesses, and that they could be contracted from women having no apparent disease. This is what we see nowadays: the lesions are not always plain; a woman may serve as a transmitting agent,—that is to say, contain the virus of a syphilitic; have time to transmit it to one or several others before her ablutions, and not be contaminated herself. The author then explains that venereal symptoms owe their variety to the different kinds of humors; and, accord-

<sup>1</sup> See, for comparison, in Chapter V, the beginning of the work of Hoang-ty.



ing to his theory, when all the humors act at the same time, there are seen sores of the penis (*dilaceratis penis*), in which worms breed, and which may bring on death. This description seems to be particularly applicable to the phagedenic chancre.

In the succeeding chapter (XIII) the author states that he will consider the diseases which he calls *roga*: literally, *small*. Hessler warns us that he has translated this word by *shameful*, having been given the seat and nature of the lesions described. The translator was right; for, as will be seen, it is venereal diseases which are concerned,—syphilitic, for the most part,—and which the author regarded as of small importance, with the exception of phagedenic chancres, often mortal, which he described in the preceding chapter:—

Breviter quatuor et quadraginta turpes morbi sunt: . . . ulcus rotundum (*vivrita*), testitudinata pustula (*kachch'hapika*), . . . lapidi simile tuber (*paschanagardab'ha*), . . . deformis unguis, pustula in capite, bubo (*vidarika*), . . . pedum dilaceratio, alopecia, juvenum papula, . . . ani præclusio. . . .

The shameful diseases number forty-four: . . . the round ulcer, the prominent *pustule*, . . . the stone-like excrescence, . . . the alterations of the *nails*, the *pustules* of the head, the bubo, . . . the ulcerations of the feet, the *alopecia*, the *papules of youths*, . . . the stricture of the anus. . . .

We now see the palmar and plantar syphilides, exostoses, and ulcerated gummata:—

In planta et palma, in articulatione, in cervice supra claviculas, nodus formicete similis tarde colligitur, ulceribus prodolore, madore et æstu prurientibus obtectus.

On the soles of the feet and palms of the hands, at the joints, on the neck above the *clavicles*, there appear late *lumps*, like elephantiasis, covered with *ulcers*, which itch painfully, by reason of the inflammation and suppuration.



Circa aures undique et in dorso  
congestus et terribilis morbus  
existit, Nymphææ bulbæ instar.

About the ears and in the back  
a red and *terrible* disease is pres-  
ent, like to the bulbs of nenu-  
phar.

This disease excited horror, like in the fifteenth century of our era.

Læsione corruptus qui unguis  
asper, niger et calidus fit, hunc  
deformem unguem sciat medicus  
nobilem esse cognominatum.

The diseased nail, which be-  
comes rough, black, and hot,—  
this deformed nail,—let the phy-  
sician know that it is called the  
*noble nail*.<sup>1</sup>

Is there here a concealed irony, and is it syphilitic onychia? This is to be presumed, being given the nature of the disease described in this chapter. After having noticed the axillary and inguinal buboes symptomatic of "corrupt humors," the author speaks of a lesion in which one is tempted to see interdigital syphilitic plaques:—

Madidis digitorum intervallis  
affectos pedes pruritu, æstu et  
dolore vexatos ex corruptæ carnis  
contractu, tanquam intumescen-  
tiam elephantiacam medicus dem-  
onstret.

When the *interdigital spaces of  
the feet* are the seat of itching,  
with exudation of inflammation  
with burning, and the tissues  
present induration, the physician  
will say that these lesions are  
like the tumefactions of elephanti-  
asis.

Hæc alopecia, calvitium,  
morbo etiam efficitur.

The disease brings on even  
*alopecia*, baldness.

. . . A phlegmate, ære et  
sanguine oriuntur papulæ juve-  
num in vultu quæ os contami-  
nant.

. . . The pituitary, the air,  
the blood, cause the *papules of  
youth* to appear, which show  
themselves upon the face, and  
by attacking the *mouth*.

Let us remark that Susruta describes all these phenomena as appertaining to one general disease. He ends this chapter with a description of phimosis.

<sup>1</sup> For further details, see the end of this chapter.



Alopecia occurring at the same time as interdigital plaques of the feet, papules of the face, and patches in the mouth force the modern diagnosis, *secondary symptoms*; and, as the author calls attention, upon several occasions, to the analogy which exists between these symptoms and elephantiasis, we will not be told that it was the latter disease. On this account, the translator cannot forbear from exclaiming<sup>1</sup>: "How ancient venereal disease is, and how this antiquity reduces to nothing every opinion of an origin of more recent date; this is plain even to a blind man!"<sup>2</sup>

There is another Hindoo work which treats of medical matters, but incidentally only. Dr. Michéa,<sup>3</sup> in an interesting article on "The State of Medicine Among the Ancient Hindoos," gives us a few extracts from this book, the "Sacteya Grantham," attributed to Dhanvantari himself, in which the Indian Æsculapius describes nine varieties of variola, of which three are pronounced incurable. Although the passages we are going to give have nothing to do with syphilis, we desire to quote them; for a number of persons, even among physicians, are ignorant of the fact that vaccine, among other things, was known in India a few thousand years before Christ. The Sanskrit text plainly states:—

Take the liquid of the pustules of the cow's teat, or from the arm of a human being, between the shoulder and elbow; place it upon the point of a lancet, and introduce it in the arm at the same place, mixing the fluid with the blood; the fever of variola (*Bhadvidæ*) will be produced.

This disease will be mild, like the animal from which it is derived; it need not cause fear, and requires no remedies; the patient may be given the food he desires.

<sup>1</sup> Notes on Chapter XII (Nidanast'hana).

<sup>2</sup> "Quam vetus igitur sit venerereus morbus, et quam valde hæc vetustas recentiorum hujus morbi historiam destruat; id apparet etiam cæco!"

<sup>3</sup> Union Médicale, 1847.



You may limit yourself to one cut, or you may make as many as six. The pustule is perfect when it is of a good color, filled with a clear liquid, and surrounded by a red circle. There is a slight fever for one, two, or three days; sometimes a slight chill, a swelling in the armpit, and other symptoms, but all of a benign character, and without danger.

This discovery takes nothing from the merit of Jenner, for Europe was ignorant, for a long time, of the discoveries of Asia. Just as the monk Schwartz, who invented gun powder in the Middle Ages, has not fallen in our esteem, because he was anticipated by the Chinese. As a matter of fact, where would the artillery of the Europeans be if they had had to wait until they had diplomatic relations with Peking to understand the use of explosives?

The sacred book of Dhanvantari also teaches us that the Hindoos were acquainted with mercurials (cinnabar, in fumigations; protochloride and bichloride of mercury, with sugar and pepper, etc., in pills); the smoke of *datura stramonium*, in asthma; nux vomica, in paralysis; the bark of the root of pomegranate, for tape-worm, etc.

In fine, if we are to believe Klein, who has devoted a work to "The Therapeutic Methods in the Oriental Indies Against the Venereal Disease,"<sup>1</sup> the Malabar traditions speak of the physicians Sangarasiar and Alesianambi mentioning syphilis. These physicians, who lived about 1000 A.D., treated with mercury.

The cause is understood.

[In an article<sup>2</sup> published subsequently to the appearance of this book, the author discusses the peculiar appearance of the nail, known as the *noble nail* in the

<sup>1</sup> F. G. Klein: De morbi venerei curatione in India orientali visitata, 1795.

<sup>2</sup> Jour. des Maladies Cut. et Syph., Sept. 31, 1890.



Vedas. It presented a *rough, deformed, black* appearance, but this scarcely justified the conclusion that it was necessarily of syphilitic origin. Dr. Buret, however, had the good fortune of observing a symptom in an old syphilitic which possesses some value; at least, in connection with the matter under consideration. The patient, a syphilitic, who was pronounced cured in the eighth year of the disease, observed somewhat later that the nail of one of his great toes had a black spot in the centre. Regarding this as probably due to some injury, he paid no further attention to it. Other toes successively exhibited this symptom, which was due to a subungual ecchymosis, caused by the syphilitic process, Dr. Buret thinks. The nails were rough and the picture presented was very similar to that of the *noble nail* of the Hindoo Vedas. While this is rather weak in the way of proof, it is an interesting condition, nevertheless, and a very rare one.]



## CHAPTER X.

### ΣΥΚΟΝ.

#### SYPHILIS AMONG THE GREEKS BEFORE AND AFTER CHRIST.

“Many arguments might be adduced to show that it was well known in the old continent, and that it prevailed among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, and their descendants, long before the discovery of America.”—BENJAMIN BELL.<sup>1</sup>

LIKE India, ancient Greece had its legend in regard to the origin of venereal diseases. But here it is no longer Siva, but Priapus, who is the hero.

According to the fable, Priapus was the son of Venus and Bacchus. Aphrodite, as the Greeks called her, had not been able to resist the glory of Bacchus, returning in triumph from India. This weakness of Venus for glory resulted in Priapus, whom Juno, in a fit of anger, caused to be born with an enormous penis. Some say that Priapus was born at Lampsacus; others, that he was merely reared there. But, no matter. At all events, this god remained there long enough to be the cock of the place, and even an indefatigable cock, much to the displeasure of the husbands, who drove him out. Priapus visited upon them a vengeance similar to that of Siva upon the Hindoos; and, says Natalis Comes, “a *terrible disease* engrafted itself upon the genital organs of the people of Lampsacus” :—

. . . Lampsacenos gravissimus pudendorum membrorum morbus invasisset.<sup>2</sup> . . .

<sup>1</sup> A Treatise on Gonorrhœa Virulenta and Lues Venerea. Edinburgh, 1793.

<sup>2</sup> Natalis Comitæ Mythologiæ, sive explicationis fabularum, libri x. Frocofurti, 1588. Mythology in Ten Books; or, Explanation of Fables. Frankfort, 1588.



These unfortunates recalled Priapus to cure them, and instituted festivals in his honor. These consisted in debauchery of all kinds. We shall see, later on, that the worship of Priapus afterward went to Rome.

The same Natalis Comes gives another history relating to the Athenians. These, it appears, not having received the images of Bacchus with great pomp, as was the custom, and whose worship Pegasus desired to introduce into Attica, "the angry god hurled a *terrible disease* upon the genital parts of men":—

. . . deus indignatus pudenda hominum morbo infestavit, qui erat illis gravissimus. . . .

They could only become cured by receiving the god with the honors due him.<sup>1</sup>

The important fact to remember, in all these legends, is that among the Greeks, like among the Hindoos, the Jews, the Chinese, etc., the origin of venereal diseases goes back to a time which (two or three thousand years before Christ) they could not exactly determine. Nevertheless, it is seen that, among all peoples of antiquity, these strange and often terrible diseases, for them, always owed their primal cause to the orgies and debaucheries, disguised under the name of feasts, in the honor of Venus Aphrodite, Bacchus, Baal Peor, Siva, Phallus, Priapus, etc. The ancients, then, had contagious diseases which were difficult to cure; and, in their simplicity, they addressed themselves to the gods of their country and of their time. This is why certain temples were places of debauchery at night and true *dispensaries* in the morning.

Such is the vague information furnished us by the

<sup>1</sup> Aristophanes, a comic poet who lived about 400 B.C., says, in one of his comedies, that "Bacchus cures the Athenians of a very serious disease of the sacred parts."



Greek fable. We will now study the scientific and literary documents, which are more precise and supplement the others. Among these writings, the works of Hippocrates and Galen stand forth prominently; and they constituted the text-books of Europe for six hundred years. The proofs derived from the ancient books which we have given up to the present will only be half-contested, we know. As a matter of fact, among the opponents of the idea we are defending, even the most violent, the majority admit, without much opposition, the antiquity of syphilis in Africa and in Asia. This is a concession made to evidence, for which we should be thankful. Astruc himself, when pushed to his last trenches, admitted that this might not be impossible. But as soon as a European nation was concerned, then the discussion recommenced, and we run up against the inflexibles. Is it admissible that, being given the wars which the Greeks waged against the Persians, the expeditions of Alexander as far as into India, the Punic wars, etc.,—is it possible, I will even say, that syphilis was arrested until the fifteenth century by the Bosphorus of Thrace and the Straits of Gibraltar? Of course not. Well, up to the present, the opposition has not yet surrendered. The reader will understand why we choose the Greek and Latin authors, and, perhaps, will pardon us for lifting a corner of the veil which conceals Roman depravity, to seek in this reeking dung-heap the pearl which can triumph over opposition; that is to say, scientific truth!

The works of Hippocrates, written either by himself or by his pupils, were composed about the middle of the fifth century B.C., for the Father of Medicine practiced at Cos in the year 460 B.C. There cannot be found in this scientific monument any description of syphilis in



the strict acceptation of the term, but there exists, for him who will see them, a host of allusions, which Littré considers as all-sufficient. Follin gives us,<sup>1</sup> through M. Proust's pen, the cause of this apparent silence of Hippocrates respecting syphilis: "Those physicians," says he, "who practiced this art in Greece, in Rome, or in Alexandria, were more than us so situated as to misunderstand the relations of local lesions with the general manifestations of syphilis. In fact, they lived in a climate and had domestic habits which were very favorable to the spontaneous cure of syphilis. We know, as a matter of fact, that pox cures much better in elevated temperatures than in low temperatures. . . . The frequent use of baths among the Orientals and the Romans added to this happy influence of temperature.

"To sum up, if the ancient physicians have not perceived, like we have, the symptoms of constitutional syphilis, it is because these symptoms, considerably attenuated by the influence of climate, did not forcibly call their attention to the origin of the disease. Besides, it is, perhaps, too much forgotten that syphilis, in our climate, is often cured by hygiene and diet."

Some authors admit that the descriptions given by the physicians of antiquity describe, in a strict sense, the primary local lesions of syphilis; but, in their opinion, the secondary lesions, even local, never existed. The cutaneous manifestations are to be attributed to all one may wish, leprosy, for example, and not to constitutional syphilis. Such is the basis of their reasoning. And they are proud to be able to say: "You see, Hippocrates does not mention it! If syphilis had been known to the ancients, it would not have escaped an

<sup>1</sup> *Traité élément de path.* Ext., t. i, art. iii. Paris, 1874. *Elementary Treatise on Surgical Pathology.*



observer like he." Without troubling ourselves with these self-constituted contradictions, let us examine ourselves the passages of Hippocrates, in which affections of the genital organs are noticed; it matters but little to us that the author does not mention their cause and origin, if the descriptions agree with what we know are the modern manifestations of syphilis.

These descriptions are somewhat scattered everywhere, but they acquire value by their entirety, without any necessity, as we have already said, of *torturing* the Greek text.<sup>1</sup>

In the chapter of *Aphorisms* (Lecture III, section 21), we find the following passage:—

In summer occur . . . *ophthalmias*, pains in the ears, *ulcerations of the mouth* (στοματῶν ἐλκώσιες), and *rotting of the genitals* (σηπεδόνες αἰδοίων).

It is plain that the ulcerations of the mouth, taken alone, are not sufficient to suggest the idea of syphilis; but their coincidence with ophthalmias and sores on the genitals leads us to seriously think. We will observe the same thing in reference to section 14 of the chapter on *Humors*:—

Under the influence of Southern winds, there come *moist ulcers* (ἔλκεια μαδαρά), especially in the *mouth* and upon the *genitals* (κάλιστα στόμα, αἰδοῖον).

<sup>1</sup> Prosper Yvaren, in the notes of his translation into French verse of the poem of Fracastor, says that "it is only by forcing the sense of words, by straining the parts of a phrase on the Procrustean bed of interpretation, by torturing texts, by isolating them from the medium in which they are placed, that one is enabled to create a sort of imaginary and fantastic disease, presenting some analogy to syphilis." All this is very nice as a metaphor, but, in plain language, this is called floundering. If the texts which we have so far quoted appear obscure, the bone-lesions which we have shown in prehistoric man are not, and we will soon see if the descriptions of Celsus and the humor of the Latin satirists deal with a fictitious disease.



In the treatise "On the Nature of Woman," we find a few sentences too vague to be considered as confirmatory. Section 60 commences thus:—

If the genital parts are apthous . . .

Under the name *apthæ* the ancients designated ulcers of small extent and superficial, or pustules; it is plain that this expression was not to be exclusively referred to ulcerating syphilides. Hippocrates recurs to this several times. Further on we read:—

Section 65. If a bad smell (*δυσοδμήη*) attaches itself to the genitals, if a growth (*κλων*) forms, and there be pain . . .

Does this mean the fetid odor of vulvar mucous patches, which might be designated by the word *κίων*, signifying *elevation, ridge*? It is possible, but not certain. In the same manner we ignore the nature of those ulcers of the vulva which impel women to scratch themselves:—

Section 66. If ulcers (*ἔλκεα*) form in the genital parts, and there be itching . . .

Nevertheless, those diseases which do not heal rapidly had to be taken into consideration, for the author speaks of them upon several occasions, and counsels a certain number of topical remedies and liniments for local treatment. Let us say, *passim*, that the Greeks, by the word *ἀνθραξ*, which we shall soon meet, did not understand modern *anthrax*, that is to say, the aggregation of furuncles which we know: by that expression the writers of the first centuries designated chancre in general, and destructive chancre in particular. In another sense this word also signified *charbon*: let us state that the authors of the Middle Ages currently employed the word *carbunculus* (small *charbon* [coal]) to denominate the chancrous ulcerations of the genitals.



Astruc held that an entire passage from Hippocrates had never been given. "A few rags of sparse phrases," says he, "are pulled out and placed end to end."

We will reproduce *in extenso* the oft-quoted paragraph of the third book of "Epidemics," the fourth constitution: the reader can then judge for himself whether the assertion of Astruc is well-founded. In this whole third book Hippocrates speaks of things having no relation with the passage under consideration: the author seems to make a digression to note a disease which has impressed him, among other things, and whose symptoms he describes in the same and only paragraph:—

Many had aphthæ and *ulcerations of the mouth* (στόματα ἔλκωδεα). Frequent *fluxions* to the *genital parts*, ulcerations (ἐλκώματα), tumors (φύματα) within and without; swelling in the groins. Moist *ophthalmias*, which were long and painful; *fleshy growths* on the eyelids, within and without, which destroyed the sight of many persons, and which are called *figs* (σῦκα). The other *sores of the genital parts* were also the seat of *fungosities*. In summer were seen a large number of *anthrax* and of other diseases which are called poisonous, extensive *pustular eruptions* (ἐκθύματα); in many, large vesicular eruptions (ἔρπητες).

Evidently this disease became epidemic, as it did in 1494. For Astruc it is the *plague*, an appellation as convenient as that of *leprosy* or *scabies*, which were so much abused in the Middle Ages. We will soon see that the Athenian plague described by Thucydides and Lucretius was, like the Egyptian plague, an epidemic of venereal character, in which syphilis was far from playing no part.

But why did not Hippocrates give it a name? Always the same objection advanced for the past four centuries! How often will it have to be repeated that the physician of Cos described symptoms, which was doing well for his time? Will the numerous diseases which existed in antiquity, and of which he was not the sponsor, be de-



nied? Because he described intermittent fever without speaking of malaria, will it be contended that the appearance of malaria dates from the nineteenth century? And lead poisoning, in which he only saw colic? Do you believe that they did not *work in lead* among the ancient Greeks? In giving the symptoms of typhoid fever,<sup>1</sup> did he suspect an inflammatory process of Peyer's patches, with ulceration? And certainly it could not be contended that dothienteritis had only existed since the Cliniques of Trousseau!

Let us now examine Galen, who was born at Pergamos A.D. 131, and wrote his works toward the end of the second century. Like Hippocrates, he was surrounded by a large number of pupils, several of whom became his collaborators. So that the Galenical work is, like a large treatise on pathology of our times, a sort of medical encyclopædia, in which each one contributes a share, under the more or less active direction of the master spirit.

<sup>1</sup> We know that Littré has stated that many cases considered before him as relating to typhoid fever were nothing but pseudo-continued fevers of a remittent type. Agreed: but there is more than one which must be referred to abdominal typhus. And, although it is somewhat extraneous to our subject, we cannot resist the temptation of giving the following case from Hippocrates, which is a part of his book on Epidemics. It may be easily seen that we have to deal with a *continued fever*, although the author did not give it a name, which lasted three weeks, with a return of the fever apparently after the first food (*febris carnis*). The title is: SEVENTH PATIENT.—“At Abdera, the young girl who lived in the Via Sacra was taken with a hot fever. She had thirst and sleeplessness. Her courses appeared upon this occasion for the first time. Sixth day: Much nausea, redness, chills, restlessness. Eighth day: Deafness, high fever, sleeplessness, nausea, chills; consciousness present, urination infrequent. Ninth and following days: Same state, the deafness persists. Fourteenth day: Abundant epistaxis, deafness diminished a little. The following days: Nausea, deafness, delirium. Twentieth day: Pains in the feet; deafness and delirium cease; slight epistaxis, sweat, apyrexia. Twenty-fourth day: Return of the fever, of the deafness; the pain in the feet persists; consciousness disturbed. Twenty-seventh day: Abundant sweat, no fever; deafness has disappeared; the pain in the feet persists, but the disease is perfectly understood.”



In a chapter entitled "Medical Definitions,"<sup>1</sup> the author explains the different Greek terms which he is to employ frequently in the course of his work. We will give a few extracts from one of the numerous Latin translations which have been made. As in Hippocrates, they are rather indefinite terms, but some of which undoubtedly referred to local phenomena of syphilis:—

Carbunculus est magis melancholico putrefacto sanguine tumor ulcerosus.

*Carbunculus* is an ulcer with swelling derived from blood putrefied by excessive melancholy.

This definition is perfectly applicable to the chancre, which is often accompanied by œdema. Literally, *small carbuncles*; that is to say, an ulcer similar to that of the carbunculous, but smaller. It cannot be ulcerated cancer, for this latter is very large, more so than the ulcer of carbuncle, and smells horribly bad, which Galen would not have failed to notice. Further on, the author gives the name *θύμος* to growths which, on account of their location, may be regarded as papulo-hypertrophic syphilides:—

Thymus asperæ carnis extuberatio est, quæ similis circa genitale ac sedem oritur.

The *thymus* is a rough-looking elevation, which all alike show themselves upon the *genitals* and about the *anus*.

Let us at once put aside the notion of hæmorrhoids, as the growths are found in other places besides the anus; there remain vegetations. The following sentence reduces this supposition to nothing, for vegetations are designated by a special word, *ἀκροχορδών*.

Acrochordon exortus est orbicularis angustamque obtinens basim.

*Acrochordon* projects, is rounded and presents a *narrow base*.

All translators are agreed in recognizing, in this

<sup>1</sup> Finit. med., 18.



expression, a variety of wart. The author next speaks of hæmorrhoids, of which some are simple and others of a *malignant nature* (*malignæ*). Outside of anal syphilides, we cannot see to what known affection these *malignant* hæmorrhoidal tumors could be referred. We must not forget that Hessler translated by *hæmorrhoid* a Hindoo word having the same meaning.

Further on, in a sort of *introduction*,<sup>1</sup> he states that “*thymus, callosities, boils, vegetations, etc., may be found on the skin, and, in a general way, on all portions of the body.*”

Cutem totiusque corporis partes exagitant acrochordones, thymi, clavi, calli, etc.

He advises removing them with the red-hot iron or powdering them with a metallic compound (*ψωριχόν*) employed at that time for the itch. The physicians of Rome cut them and smiled, according to Juvenal, which proves, in the first place, that they were not of a serious nature, and also their lively origin. In another chapter, which deals of the *composition of remedies according to their locality*,<sup>2</sup> he gives advice “for *tubercles* which occur upon the genital organs (*ad tubercula in pudendis nascentia*).” Let us immediately call attention to the fact that the mucous patch was for a long time designated, among other names, by those of *mucous tubercle, flat tubercle, etc.* The author next states that resin is very good for the fissures and rhagades of the same organs (*fissuras ac rimas pudendorum juvat resina*), advocates sovereign remedies for condylomata, and describes a *psoriasis scroti*, meaning, by that, an induration of the integument of the scrotum, occasionally accompanied by

<sup>1</sup> Medicus seu Introduct., cap. xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> De Composit. medicament. secund. loc. ; i, 3 ; ix, 8.



true ulcers. We call attention to these passages, without further comment, in order to avoid repetition.

Finally,—what is not unimportant, as it deals with an expression which has passed into several modern languages,—Archigenes, who edited that portion of the work of Galen entitled “Of Local Diseases,”<sup>1</sup> speaks of the peculiar pains of the periosteum, which, says he, are so deep and so constant that the patient “believes that the *bones themselves* are the seat of the pain”:

. . . ossium ipsorum veluti dolentium inducunt imaginem.

The author adds that these pains are known as *osteocopic* (ὀστέοχοίποι). We will not lose our time in showing that these osteocopic pains, peculiar to syphilis to-day, were not simply rheumatic at the time when Galen lived.

Such is the information furnished us by the two most celebrated Greek physicians. There are others whose works, either complete or fragmentary, have come to us, and have a certain weight, although those authors do not enjoy the fame of Hippocrates and Galen. Among these physicians it is proper to mention Dioscorides and Aretæus, anterior to Galen; and Oribasius, Aetius, Alexander of Tralles, Paulus Ægineta, etc. These last, with the exception of Oribasius, having lived in the sixth and seventh centuries, will be analyzed in our study on the Middle Ages. Another Greek physician, Celsus, in whose work there is much valuable information, will be the first author examined in the next chapter, with the Roman writers. As a matter of fact, Celsus, who lived in the age of Augustus, was established at Rome, and his works are written in Latin.

In almost all the works of the physicians we have

<sup>1</sup> De locis. affect., ii, cap. viii.



just cited, entire chapters of Hippocrates and of Galen are found reproduced; and, in a general way, the sentences, or parts of them, relating to venereal diseases, are about the same in all. The expressions, chancres (*ἀνθρακες*, *carbunculi*), rhagades, erosions (*rimæ*), excrescences, recur at every moment; but, in order not to weary the reader, we will only give those quotations which prove the most.

Pedanius Dioscorides lived about A.D. 60. There may be noticed, in his treatise, passages imitated from Hippocrates; but, on the other hand, there are found more allusions to venereal diseases than in the work of the physician of Cos. One may see that these diseases were already better observed; and they are described with greater detail. In the first book of the "*Materia Medica*," in Chapter XXXIV of the Greek-Latin translation,<sup>1</sup> we find Dioscorides advising baths for *condylomata* and *erosions of the anus*:—

Balnei . . . rimis sedis et condylomatis perunctione prosunt.

In Chapter XLIII, he states that oil of myrtle is good against *papules* (*ἔξάνθηματα*), *fissures*, and *condylomata*:—

Myrteum oleum . . . facit ad . . . papulas, rhagadas, condylomata. . . .

Here papules are grouped with fissures and excrescences, and are given the same treatment. The author had probably seen these different manifestations occurring at the same time, without suspecting their cause. But let us continue:—

<sup>1</sup> De Materia Medica, lib. i.



Chap. lxxxii. Thus cum lactetritum et linamento exceptum sedis ac reliquarum partium maligna mitigat. . . .

Chap. lcliv. Pix liquida . . . ceræ admixta vulvæ tubercula anique duritias discutit, . . . carbunculos et putrida ulcera marginibus circumdat.

Chap. cxxxiv. Utiliter partes eâ (amurcâ) eluuntur in sedis, genitalium matricisque ulceribus.

Incense triturated with milk and made into a liniment softens *malignant ulcers of the anus* and of other parts. . . .

Liquid pitch mixed with wax resolves *tubercles of the vulva* and the *hard tumors* of the anus, cicatrizes *chancres* and unites the edges of putrid ulcers.

It (the marc<sup>1</sup> of oil) has a useful action on the diseased parts in the case of *ulcers of the anus*, of the *genital organs*, and of the womb.

All the preceding could very well be referred to chancres and papulo-hypertrophic and ulcerative syphilides; we cannot easily see what other explanation could be given without resorting to the imagination. We will now see the entire series of secondary and tertiary lesions unfold itself:—

Chap. cli. Quod e nucleis (mali punici) exprimitur, coctum mellique admixtum, ad ulcera facit et oris et genitalium et sedis, nec non ad digitorum pterygia, ulcera depascentia et quæ in carnibus luxuriantur, itemque ad aurium dolores et narium vitia, maxime vero ex acido punico sumptum.

The juice obtained by pressing the seeds (of pomegranate), cooked with honey, is good for *ulcers of the mouth*, of the *genitals*, and of the *anus*, as well as for *pterygia of the fingers*, *eating ulcers* which luxuriate in the *flesh*, in the same manner, pains of the ears, and diseases of the *nostrils* cure especially by the acid taken from the pomegranate.

There, again, a uniform treatment is devoted to multiple symptoms which were most probably observed in the same patient, either altogether or consecutively; and, if Dioscorides had added that all these phenomena were the successive manifestations of a single disease of genital origin, no one would to-day deny the syphilitic

<sup>1</sup> The *marc* or grounds remaining after olives have been crushed and deprived of their oil.



nature of the affection. As a matter of fact, how is it that in this succession of accidents cannot be seen buccal, vulvar, preputial, and anal syphilides, syphilitic onychia, ulcerating gummata of the muscles, perhaps even syphilitic coryza and otorrhœa? And all these morbid products were repressed by the aid of the same acid; is this not what is done in our day with nitrate of silver, or even the acid nitrate of mercury? Our way of seeing appears, to us, at least, as rational as that method which consists in cudgelling their brains and subsequently victoriously asserting, like Astruc and his imitators, that these extracts refer to I don't know what disease, which has disappeared in our days, *which resembled syphilis*, but which was not syphilis. And these things are written without so much as a smile, because it is about syphilis! And yet, what would be thought of the innovator who would come, with the aid of a similar argument, and pretend that gastric embarrassment or diarrhœa dated from the reign of King Dagobert?

The physician who appears next, Aretæus, of Cappadocia, lived about A.D. 90. Nothing touching upon venereal diseases occurs in his book. However, in a chapter devoted to the treatment of malignant affections (*pestilentium affectium*) of the throat,<sup>1</sup> he describes a case of loss of substance which one is tempted to refer to the tertiary period of syphilis.

He next speaks of *Egyptian and Syrian ulcers*, in which he recognizes a special throat disease:—

Quibusdam etiam columella  
exesa est usque ad os (μέχρις  
δοστέον) palati et tonsillæ usque  
ad basim et epiglottidem. . . .

In some even the uvula is de-  
stroyed, even to the palate-bone  
and the tonsils to the roots of the  
tongue and epiglottis. . . .

As to Oribasius, who lived about A.D. 360, although

<sup>1</sup> Therapeutics, vol. i, chap. ix.



three centuries later than Dioscorides, he only gives us information as vague as that of Hippocrates and Galen, authors from whom he borrowed extensively. In the extracts translated by Darenberg,<sup>1</sup> we find a few expressions which seem to refer to phagedenic chancres and to the secondary lesions of syphilis. In Book IX of the *Medical Collection* we find the author recommending poultices of bread and lentils for "certain ulcers, especially of the genitals."

Chap. xxxvii. . . ὅπη νομαί τινες, μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῶν αἰδοίων.

In Book X, he speaks of certain astringent pastilles used as an ointment for the "chancre and ulcers of a bad nature."

Chap. xxiv. ἄνθραξι, τοῖς κακοήθεισι τῶν ἐλκῶν.

We have already said that the Greek word *anthrax*, rendered *carbunculus* in Latin versions of the Middle Ages, signified *chancre* when it was located upon the generative organs. In Hindoo, the words *Nar-Farsi*, *Ateshi-Farsi*, signify *Persian fire*, a phrase signifying chancre or anthrax, indifferently. It is, if we are to believe Rosenbaum, the expression employed by the *Cabirajas*; that is to say, the physicians of India. As to the word *κακοήθης*, it has passed into the French language with the sense of *malignant* and remained until the sixteenth century; at least, since Thierry de Héry describes "ulcères cacoëths" in 1533.<sup>2</sup> About the same time, Rabelais<sup>3</sup> speaks of a "maladie cacoëthe."

In Chapter XXVII Oribasius advises different ointments for ordinary vegetations, and alum, combined with

<sup>1</sup> The chapters of this book are classified in a ridiculous manner, and their numbers do not agree with those of Latin editions.

<sup>2</sup> Malign Ulcers, Thierry de Héry, *loc. cit.* (See chap. i, description of the bubo.)

<sup>3</sup> A Malign Disease, Pantagruel., lib. iii, chap. xiv.



blue vitriol and myrrh obtained by pressure, "for fungosities of the anus and genitals."

. . . πρὸς δὲ τὰς ἐν δακτυλίῳ καὶ αἰδοίοις ὑπεροχὰς.

Evidently he speaks of other things than simple vegetations which had their special ointment (the text is clear), or of hæmorrhoids, as the anus was not their only seat. Outside of syphilides, it cannot be easily seen what these elevated pimples (ὑπεροχὰς) could have been. Further on the author speaks of excrescences *resembling figs* (συκώδεις), and he employs the same word,—ὑπεροχὰς.

Let us now examine the complete works of the same author, according to the Greek-Latin edition of Kühn. In the *Synopses*<sup>1</sup> we find, in Book VII, descriptions which may be referred to the secondary period:—

Chap. xxxix. Thymus est ulcus aspera et squalida carne excrescens. Fit autem et in ano et in pudendo.

*Thymus* is composed of uneven, rough, and *ulcerated excrescences*. It grows about the *anus* and *pudenda*.

This is truly that uneven group of mucous patches which are elevated, and which extend from the anterior commissure of the vulva to the anus. Besides, it is well known that vegetations, properly so called, are not ulcerative. Let us now go to Book IX:—

Chap. xvii. Ad rimas quæ in sede et pudendis sunt. . . .

For the erosions of the anus and genitals. . . .

Chap. xxxvii. Pudendorum anique ulcera quæ absque inflammatione oriuntur, valde exsiccantia medicamenta postulant.

Ulcers of the genitals and anus which do not present inflammatory reaction require more especially remedies which dry.

There existed, then, in the time of Oribasius, ulcerations of the sexual organs without inflammation; that

<sup>1</sup> *Synopseos*, lib. vii, chap. xxxix; ix, chap. xvii, xxxvii, xxxviii.



is to say, other than herpes progeneralis, furuncle, abscess, etc. As to treatment, it has not varied. Do we not, even to-day, simply place an inert powder upon syphilitic chancres to make them dry? Soft chancres would not have been satisfied with this anodyne treatment. Like Galen, the author praises resin for erosions of the genital organs (*ad rimas pudendorum*). In another part of his work, which treats of "Therapeutics of Local Diseases,"<sup>1</sup> he again speaks of ulcers of the anus and of the genital organs, and he gives advice for those cases in which the ulcers are *moist* (*si ulcera humida sint*). So there were some which were not, or, in other words, which did not suppurate. We will see, later on, that Celsus also distinguishes soft chancres—those which suppurate, the *moist*—from indurated chancres, which suppurate very little, or not at all,—the *pura siccaque* (clean and dry). Further on, Oribasius speaks of œdema of the genitalia (*pudendum intumescens*) and of ulcers of the vulva. And we know that the primary lesion is the most frequent cause of genital œdema,—swelling *en masse* of the prepuce or of the labia majora and minora.<sup>2</sup>

Such are the documents which the best-known Greek physicians of antiquity furnish us. Before taking up the philosophers, rhetoricians, historians, and poets, we will say a few words of the manners of this people, which occupied the foremost place in Europe in the arts, sciences, and literature before the Christian era. However, we will be less prolix than Rosenbaum, who, under

<sup>1</sup> De locor. affector. curatione, lib. iv, chap. cii and ciii.

<sup>2</sup> Non-medical readers will pardon us for going into such long technical discussions and for quoting so profusely. But, among scientific men who do not admit the antiquity of syphilis in Europe are a few men at the head of schools; on this account we are forced to be as complete as possible.



the pretense of writing the history of syphilis in antiquity, has really described prostitution among the different peoples, complacently dilating upon the most depraved vices of the Orientals. He spreads before us, over a space of more than a hundred pages, in a heavy and prosy style, a mountain of filth, which he could have easily compressed in fifty lines. In addition, the German author cites such a profusion of quotations that it gives one vertigo; and, as he gives them without any translation, and almost always without comment, and, as the majority prove nothing, or are opposed to that which he wants to demonstrate, the question which arises is, whether they have been carefully considered, or even well understood.

The free citizen, in Greece, had to do with three classes of women. First, the lawful wife, the mistress of the house, she upon whom devolved the care of the house and the perpetuation of the race; but she was the most neglected one. All obeyed her; many honors and duties, but little pleasure. Then came the servants, for the whim or material necessity of the time being,—beasts of burden without individuality. So much for the home. In the third place, the mistress, for pleasure.<sup>1</sup> The last were generally taken from among dancing girls, actresses, or hetairæ (*ἑταίρας*, *prostitutes*). These horizontals of primitive ages were more or less high-strung, like their prototypes of to-day. History has handed down to us the names of the most celebrated hetairæ,—Aspasia, Phryne, and Lais. Hospitality, with the last one, whose headquarters were at Corinth, was

<sup>1</sup> This was an admitted fact in Athens, for Demosthenes says, in one of his addresses: "We have courtesans for pleasure, concubines (servants) to take care of our bodies, and wives to give us children and supervise our homes with fidelity."



taxed at fabulous prices, whence the proverb, *Non licet omnibus adire Corinthum*, which may be freely translated, "Every one cannot afford an escapade to Corinth." These fashionable beauties generally dyed their hair yellow with saffron, a custom in which they were imitated by the honest women, just like in our century; and what proves it is that the comic poet Menander<sup>1</sup> ridicules them in his pieces. In our days, as a result of chemical progress, oxygenated water has taken the place of saffron. For men about town, strangers, people in general, there were, in addition to actresses and hetairæ, the *dicteriadæ*, boarders at the special bawdy houses instituted by Solon, and known as *dicterions*.

So much for physiological needs. But the ancient Greeks did not stop there; they were too close to Asia not to have been tainted by the Oriental vices which, as a matter of fact, reigned in Athens—and especially in Rome—in Pagan times. Certain low beings, the shame of their sex, did not fear to forget their manhood to place themselves at the service of the most revolting passions. They were called *cinædi* (*κίναιδοι*; in Latin, *cinædi*, *pathici*); that is to say, accommodating instruments for *Socratic love*, upon which we cannot dilate. Dioscorides, on account of one of their monstrous acts, also called them *στόμαργους* (from *στόμα*, *bucca*, and *ἔργον*, *labor*),<sup>2</sup> an expression which corresponds to the word *fellatores* of the Romans. In a purely pathological point of view, it is well to remark that Erasistratus

<sup>1</sup> Menander lived about 300 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> For those who prefer seeing in the word *στόμαργος* an Attic form of *στόμαλγος* or *στομαλγής* (who has a sore mouth), we will say that this epithet then applied to the result of the vice, instead of the act itself; the two versions are admissible, but of little importance.



gives them the name of *ῥινοκολούροι*, who have the nose eaten; we may suppose a tertiary lesion, with necrosis of the bones of the nose, syphilis not being incompatible with such a profession. Besides, it would appear that the *cinædi* recognized each other by a characteristic hoarse voice; but it did not exist in all these miserable beings. At least, this is what is clearly indicated in an indignant discourse of Dion Chrysostom, the Greek sophist of Tarsus, who lived at the end of the first century of our era.<sup>1</sup> He complains of the vice (*ἔργον*) which "dishonors and marks the city," for everywhere is heard the voice of the Sodomites (*ἀκολάστοις*); then he cries:—

What virtuous man could endure this rough (*χαλεπόν*) and discordant (*ἀγριον*) voice?

And he adds, what shows very well that it concerned a pathological fact:—

Although this quality (of voice) is not always met with and among us, it is, nevertheless, inherent in them; it is their characteristic mark (*σύμβολον*).

We will see later on that Martial brands, in the same way, the vices of the *pædicones* (pederasts), and makes sport of their hoarse and discordant voice (*rancidulo* or *rancidulo ore*);<sup>2</sup> it might very well be syphilitic laryngitis. Dion Chrysostom then reproaches his co-citizens for enduring, in their city, the presence of those foul citizens whose nose is attacked by a sort of *professional disease* (*πάθος*), which gives them their nasal voice.

You prefer, then, this voice to all others, as if it were possible to produce good music with the nose! Such a rhythm must necessarily be followed by *something else in addition*.

<sup>1</sup> Orationes, xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Martial, lib. vii, epigr. 34.



The rhetor of Tarsus was probably aware that the disease did not limit itself to the nose and throat. He terminates by addressing the Sodomites themselves, and he tells them positively that the disease from which they suffer was contracted in their monstrous practices.

You are ignorant of the fact that an *endemic disease* has seized upon your *noses*, in the same manner as, in others, the wrath of heaven has wreaked itself upon some particular parts, such as the hands, the feet, or the face. It is said that Aphrodite (Venus), to punish the women of Lemnos,<sup>1</sup> sent them a disease of the armpits; well! it is thus that divine wrath *has destroyed the nose* of the majority of you, and it is from that that this peculiar sound emanates; for from what cause could it come? It is the *sign of depravity* of the most shameless kind pushed to delirium, and to the scorn of all morality.

As for us, who have not the same reasons as the Greek orator to explain embarrassing cases, we will give, as etiological cause of this, caries of the bones of the nose, syphilitic otitis, at least as active as the anger of Jupiter. After all, Dion Chrysostom was not the only one to see in this morbid symptom the result of the anger of the Olympian divinities, for Herodotus, who lived about 450 B.C., says, in his book entitled "Clio,"<sup>2</sup> that Venus revenged herself in a similar manner by visiting a venereal disease upon the Scythians who had sacked one of her temples in Syria.

The goddess sent a *female disease* (*θήλειαν νοῦσον*) to those among the Scythians who had sacked her temple at Ascalon, and this punishment was transmitted forever to their *posterity*. The Scythians say that this disease is a punishment for the sacrilege, and that the strangers who travel in their country take notice of the condition of those of the Scythians called Enares (*Ἐναρέας*).

<sup>1</sup> And not *Lesbos*, as is said by all authors who record this fact upon the good faith of their predecessors without having referred to the Greek text. We desire to remark the same thing of Herodotus, whose story is entitled *Clio*, and not *Chio*; of Plutarch, who speaks of the goddess *Syria*, and not *Syra*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. cv.



Certain commentators have seen gonorrhœa in this disease of sexual origin. We will restrict ourselves to calling attention to the fact that the gonorrhœal flow is not hereditary, and is not accompanied by external manifestations visible to those passing by; whereas syphilis corresponds much better to the symptoms described by the Greek historian.<sup>1</sup>

At all events, intelligent men of those times had little faith in these good legends for the populace and which they propagated by their writings. In fact, Plutarch,<sup>2</sup> another historian who lived in the second century of our era, says, maliciously, that there are "superstitious persons who believe that the goddess Syria eats the legs, covers the body with ulcers, and makes the liver melt in those who eat herrings and gudgeons."

At Syriam deam superstitiosi potant si quis mœnam aut apuas edat, ejus crura (τὰ ἀντικνήμα) corrodere (διεσθίειν), corpus ulceribus (ἔλκεσι) opplere, jecur (το ἥπαρ) colliquare.

It may be seen that Plutarch has another opinion, which he keeps to himself; having no reason to irritate his reserve, or purpose to explain these symptoms by tertiary, visceral, and subcutaneous lesions.

A third historian, Thucydides,<sup>3</sup> who lived in the time of Pericles (fifth century B.C.), and was, conse-

<sup>1</sup> This passage of Herodotus, which bothered the good Astruc, has furnished him with matter for a harrowing discussion. Rejecting (this goes without saying) the idea of venereal disease, he states (entirely satisfied with his discovery) that the *θήλειαν νοῦσον* was the loss of virility; and, without seeing the enormity of his mistake, he concludes that the Enares were . . . *eunuchs!* If the great "novelist" of syphilis was not dead for more than a century, we would simply ask him—for the text of Herodotus is formal—where and when he has seen people who were eunuchs from *father to son*.

<sup>2</sup> De Superstitione, section 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Histor. belli Peloponnesiaci.* History of the Peloponnesian War.



quently, a contemporary of Herodotus, relates the history of the plague at Athens ; in this description we find the following sentence :—

The disease also attacked the *genital parts* (τὰ ἀλοῖα), the hands, (χεῖρας), the feet (πόδας), and several, having lost their parts, escaped death.

Lucretius, in his poem on "Nature," describes the same symptoms in relation to this epidemic, as we will see in the next chapter.

Let us now examine the light poets, whose works, unfortunately, are partly lost. Among the fragments which have been found and collected under the name of *Anthology*, there may be met here and there allusions to syphilis which are more or less vague. So, not to weary the reader, we will merely quote one poet, Eubulus, who wrote for the theatre about 375 B.C. One of his comedies is worthy of our attention ; there remain nine verses which we will analyze. But, as our interpretation is sure to be called into question, we will discuss each word after the other, giving the Greek text and the Latin version which accompanies it. In the piece entitled *Nannion*, the author pities the one who hides himself in order to give himself up to his amorous diversions.

"Is it not more simple," says the character, "to go in open daylight to see the pretty girls which the countries on the banks of the Eridon furnish us ! One's choice can be made in complete safety ; they are arranged side by side, entirely naked, or clothed in a transparent tunic." . . .

Eubulus simply advises his fellow-citizens to go to the *dicterions*. It is probable that these establishments were kept supplied by the girls born in the countries irrigated by the Po, for the text states : "The girls whom the Eridon nourishes in its sacred waves."



ὄσας

Ἡριδανὸς ἀγροῖς ὕδασι κηπεύει κόρας.

This figure of speech is frequently employed in ancient poetry. The author is cynical when he advises going to the brothel in open day, but he reasons logically, as will be seen from the last three verses:—

μικροῦ πρᾶσθαι κέρματος τὴν ἡδονήν,  
καὶ μὴ λαθραῖαν κύπριν, αἰσκιττην νόσων  
κασῶν διώκειν, ἴβρεος, οὐ πόθου, χάριν.

. . . nummulo emere voluptatem, neque clandestinam venere-  
rem, turpissimum morborum  
omnium, persequi, superbiæ, non  
amoris, causa.

. . . there for the smallest  
coin (one may) buy pleasure; no  
risk, like in secret adventures,  
of finding, at the same time, the  
*most shameful of diseases*. Do not  
tell me that it is love you seek in  
your pleasures; it is the satisfac-  
tion of your self-love.

We have given as broad a translation as possible, in order to make it explicit; now we will take the Latin, which is literally rendered from the Greek, word for word. The most disputed phrase is plainly that in which it is literally said: . . . “while he may go and see; . . . buy pleasure, etc., and not run after (*persequi*) clandestine pleasure, and the most shameful (*turpissimum*) of all diseases (*morborum*), on account of self-love, and not for love.” It may be objected that there is but a single verb, *διώκειν* (to pursue), for the two things which may be reaped,—the pleasure and the disease; next, that no conjunction connects the two parts of the sentence, which permits the second one to be regarded as qualitative, and to translate thus: . . . “pursue secret pleasure, the most shameful of vices.” . . . We will answer, first, that the word *νοσος* (*morbos*, in Latin) may sometimes signify *vice*, figuratively and by extension, but that it is much more



simple to give it its usual meaning, *disease*, than to look for the exceptional meaning it may have in certain cases. We will say next that this last interpretation would not be well understood, for, in a general way, and being given the person in the play, it cannot be understood why he should be more ashamed of a secret adventure (*obscuras nuptias*) with any irregular woman than to go in broad daylight, with a disregard of all shame, into an establishment for that purpose, and choose merchandise in consideration of money (*nummulo*). On the contrary, with the meaning we propose, it is easily seen that the character of Eubulus warns young Greeks against clandestine prostitution, more dangerous, as in our days, than legalized prostitution,—that which is regulated. The author is not giving a course in morals; he gives hygienic advice, and his warnings may be summed up as follows: “In wishing to gain the illusion of a conquest one is more exposed, for then all possibility of restriction is suppressed.” As to the conjunction *et* (*καί*), which should join the two parts of the sentence, it may very well have been omitted designedly, on account of the metre, especially as it is not indispensable for an understanding of the text. Conclusion: there were more chances in Athens before Christ, like in Paris in the nineteenth century, of acquiring syphilis with the unknown women who are met [“street-walkers”], who call themselves virtuous, than with the inmates of public houses,—human cattle which could be examined in broad daylight (*ad solem*).

We do not have to seek whether it is poetic to risk, prosaic to avoid, or moral to abstain, our subject not including this variety of studies.

We now arrive to the time of Christ. Christian martyrology itself (who would have believed it?) will



furnish us proofs; but we must be believed on the word of the Fathers of the Church. Here a little history is necessary; let us review, in a few lines, the principal benefits of Christianity,—a social result which we make it a duty to proclaim loudly.

The work of Christ was to teach humanity that it should respect itself. The religion which he founded placed a curb upon the torrents of ancient corruption, the infamous practices of Pagan religion, and that lubricity which the populace exhibited in a manner that might be called official,—as at Rome, for example. But, as Dufour observes,<sup>1</sup> it required not less than three centuries of contention, sermons, and especially of example, to overthrow the haunts of prostitution; that is to say, the temples of Isis, of Priapus, of Ceres, of Venus, of Flora, and of other divinities whose worship was merely a pretext for the most monstrous debauches. But Christianity soon fell into the opposite excess; it required absolute continence. Exaggerations are the inevitable consequence of all religions, political or moral revolutions. Each one has its fanatics who go beyond the object. Let us interrogate history. In the Middle Ages, some fanatic monks tortured in the name of Christian charity; in 1793, the populace assassinated in the name of liberty; in the first days of Catholicism, the apostles proscribed sexual relations in the name of dignified manhood; and, by dint of imagining that it was agreeable to the Creator to condemn to rest the organs which he had given for a purpose diametrically opposed (*crescite et multiplicamini*),<sup>2</sup> the fact was lost sight of that the end of the world would have been the

<sup>1</sup> Hist. de la Prostitution. Paris, 1851. History of Prostitution.

<sup>2</sup> "Cross and multiply," said the Lord to the children of Noah, when they left the Ark. (Genesis, chap. viii, v. 17.)



inevitable result of a practical application of this theory. But, happily for the history of nations, there were dissenters. We may readily assume that Saint Paul was not a very warm partisan of conjugal union, for he says to the Corinthians: "It is well for your daughters to marry, but better for them not to."<sup>1</sup> His doctrine was adopted by the first Fathers of the Church and by the Councils. "From this horror of incontinence," says Dufour, "Christian celibacy was to inevitably result."

It did result, in fact. Celibacy was adopted in principle, and existed *de facto*, but much later for the members of clergy. The theory was absurd, from a natural point of view, since it is opposed to physiology, but excellent for the object which a militant sect of the sixteenth century proposed. This object consisted in putting different members of the association in groups, and it was a complete success without having made nature lose any of her rights. In fact, the *is pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant*<sup>2</sup> of the *Code Civil* levels all difficulties which could arise. Loyola, born shrewd, immediately saw the advantages he could derive from a principle which produced power. By the sole fact of the existence of "regulation" celibacy, society, from an intellectual point of view, is not in danger; but there are pathological consequences for this disregard of nature imposed by the canons. For certain cold or sufficiently strong natures the battle is possible, if not easy; but how many tottering minds in a contrary case!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Epistle I, chap. vii, v. 38.

<sup>2</sup> The law recognizes no father but the husband.

<sup>3</sup> We disclaim being looked upon as a "devourer of priests," for we have no hatred for members of the secular clergy, the greater part of whom are men of integrity, and our friends are among them. The rôle of the physiologist is to observe and draw his conclusions without seeking to please or offend; that is, by keeping aloof from religious or political quarrels, for which he does not care.



Then may be explained unnatural vices, rapes, the monstrous acts, which but too frequently occupy our courts of law. Or, in the case of women, it is nerve-troubles in all their forms, mystic or libidinous, or that erotic furor which fed the funeral piles of the Middle Ages, under the name of demonomania. In the nineteenth century the exstastics are called *saints*; in convents, those *preparatory schools for hysteria*, the brains of unfortunate girls, who may or may not be so predisposed, are too frequently unsettled by such spectacles, re-inforced by appropriate teaching, and who, not having been successfully enrolled, later on will bear, instead of strong and well-balanced citizens, enervated and stunted beings.

After what we have said, it will be understood why it was that Christian women held to their virginity above all, at the time of the martyrology ordered by the Roman emperors. And one of the first cares of the consuls or governors of tributary provinces was to send them to a brothel to be given over to public prostitution. The inhabitants were notified of the fact by a placard affixed to the house of prostitution. Then they proceeded to a series of tortures which varied according to the inventive faculties of these cowardly persecutors. Are we to see retaliation in the horrors of the Inquisition, the massacres of St. Bartholomew and the Dragonades? If so, what other conclusion can be drawn but that the human being is born bloodthirsty, and that circumstances alone make him victim or executioner? It is true that many centuries separate us from these historical dishonors, and that it is said we are civilized; let us not forget, however, that it was but yesterday that one dared cry, in the face of Europe: "Might is right!"



Some of the martyrs, say the Fathers of the Church, were saved from defloration by divine intervention. Those who wished to touch St. Agnes, for example, fell dead, according to St. Ambrose. Another, at Corinth, conceived, to save herself, a means which very few—at least, we hope so—virgins of our time would imagine. From the stand-point which interests us the event proves that venereal diseases were known by everybody, for the virgin in question knew a great deal for a young patrician. If we are to believe Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis, in Bithynia (Asia Minor), who lived about A.D. 400, she was sent, like the others, to a brothel.<sup>1</sup> Immediately the libertines arrived, upon seeing the placard.

. . . Illa autem virgo honestissima et imprimis veneranda, et verba ad deceptionem deflectens, suppliciter eis dicebat, rogans: Habeo ulcus (ἔλκος) in loco occulto (κεκρυμμένον), quæ mirandum in modum male olet (ἔσκάτως ὀζει), et timeo ne ros meî odium capiat propter ulcus aversandum. . . .

. . . But the virgin, who was very honest, and, above all, venerable, being disposed to deceive them, implored them to listen: "I have," said she, "an ulcer in a *hidden place*, and which *smells very badly*. I fear that you would hold me in aversion if you came to *catch my ulcer*." . . .

Palladius says that he read this account in a *very old book* written by one Hippolytus, who was intimate with the Apostles. Without entering into an interminable discussion upon the nature of the disease, we note the fact that there was at Corinth, in the first century of our era, and it was notoriously known, an affection characterized by one or more *ulcerations of the genital parts, contagious, spreading a fetid odor, and not apparently interfering with the general health.* For a mind which

<sup>1</sup> Palladius, *loc. cit.*, chap. cxlviii: *De femina nobilissima quæ fuit semper virgo.* (Of a young patrician girl who always remained a virgin).



is unprepared, this is a good description of vulvar syphilides.

The same Palladius also relates the story,<sup>1</sup> so often quoted, of a pious hermit, called Ero, who did not know how to resist temptation, prickings, longings, etc., as well as St. Anthony, the incorruptible, who was immortalized by Gustave Flaubert. It would appear that, in spite of the sermons of St. Paul, the devil is not always unsuccessful. But let us leave our Bithynian bishop speak:—

. . . Finally, feeling the influence of some malice of the demon, and being no longer able to remain in his cell, he left for Alexandria. . . . There he frequented the theatres and equestrian games, and became a frequenter of taverns. He gave himself up to the pleasures of the table and indulged to excess in spirits, which led him to the shameful desire for woman. Being resolved to sin, he had repeated relations with a dancing girl, and finally found himself attacked by an ulcer (ἔλκος). In consequence of his debauchery and as a divine punishment, there appeared a chancre (ἀνθραξ) upon the glans. He was ill six months, then his sexual organs mortified and dropped off. When he became somewhat better, he returned to his solitude. . . . The operation not having been made in time, he succumbed a few days afterward.

We have quoted this passage because it has been given by a large number of authors; but, for us, the disease of Ero is a typical form of phagedenic chancre, to which syphilis was absolutely foreign.

In conclusion, to terminate this study on Greece, we will say that we are much inclined to see, like Follin and Rosenbaum, exostoses of the skull in those *horns*, so frequent in the inhabitants of the Island of Cyprus, who were designated in that country under the name of *Κεραστία*. This information emanates from Xenagoras, cited by Natalis Comes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxxii. De Erone.

<sup>2</sup> Mythologia, lib. iii.



. . . Deinde dicta (Cyprus) *Cerastia*, ut inquit Xenagoras in libro secundo de insulis, quod illam homines habitarent qui multos tumores tanquam cornua quædam in capite habere videntur, cum cornua κέρατα dicta sint a Græcis et κέρασται cornuti.

. . . Then Cyprus was called *Cerastia*, as Xenagoras says in his second book on islands, and this because the inhabitants, having numerous *tumors* on the head, appeared to have *horns*, as the Greek for *horns* is *kerata*, and, for those who are horned, *kerastai*.

It must also be remembered, from an etymological point of view, that one of the most venomous serpents is called *Cerastus*, on account of the two small horns which it carries on the head, but which, of course, have nothing to do with syphilis. The horns, properly so called, which are found in certain persons [*cornu cutaneum*], are rare in occurrence; and, for it to have been frequent enough in the Island of Cyprus to have given the country a significant name, it must be that this lesion had a current disease for its cause, and this disease, we fear, will continue for a long time yet.



## CHAPTER XI.

### FICUS.

#### SYPHILIS IN ROME UNDER THE CÆSARS (BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA).

“ Il est impossible de méconnaître que la depravation des mœurs avait multiplié chez les Romains le germe et les ravages des maladies de Vénus.”—P. DUFOUR.

[It is impossible to ignore that the depraved customs of the Romans had multiplied the germ and the ravages of the diseases of Venus.]

WE now approach the most interesting as well as most delicate part of our work. The most interesting, because the authors from whom we will quote seem in some sort of a way nearer to us, and are more familiar to us. As a matter of fact, every one does not read Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, hieroglyphics, Copt, Persian, even Greek; whilst Latin is familiar to all who have finished their studies, even incompletely; and, providing that the translation be given with the text, one can to a certain degree compare the proposed interpretation, instead of taking the author's word for it. For all the idioms brought forward, upon which we have had to depend, the reader has almost inevitably preserved a doubt. With Latin we have nothing of the sort. We have said that this work is a delicate one. Alas! yes; for the cause of our object, the more value our proofs have, the more licentious are the works from which they are derived. We find ourselves face to face with a difficult problem; we must analyze in acceptable prose the most immoral poetry of antiquity. And to say that this



poetry was a faithful picture of Roman customs! It is quite consoling for our much-abused epoch, but it does not solve the problem. On the one hand, we would feel grieved to have our intentions so misunderstood as to lead to the belief that we have tried to give a course of lectures on pornography; on the other hand, we cannot resign ourselves to leave in obscurity the best materials for our argument. And, while asking the reader's pardon for leading him into these literary cloacæ, we will do all that is humanly possible to mitigate the fetidity of the text. At all events, we are persuaded that the intelligent reader will have the good sense to forget the nauseating after-taste of these free poems, and only see in them the irrefutable elements of a thesis which it is difficult to sustain. So, laying aside conventional prudery, which should disappear in a scientific territory, he will bow, like we, before those ineffaceable documents which antiquity has transmitted to us, and which confirm the first sentence of the Bible, according to Ricord: *In the beginning God created the heavens, the earth, man, and venereal diseases!*

Let us first study the authors who touch upon the medical art, more or less; that is to say, physicians and naturalists. The most celebrated physician of Rome whose name has been handed down to us is Celsus. He was of Greek origin, but lived in Latium during the Augustan period.<sup>1</sup> It was at about this time that physicians worthy of the name were *tolerated* at Rome. Several Greek practitioners, who had imbibed the works of Hippocrates, and who were faithful followers of his teachings, had already attempted to establish themselves in Italy; but, if they were borne, so to speak, in times

<sup>1</sup> First century B.C. Celsus lived at the beginning of this century.



of epidemics, they were, on the other hand, dismissed with contempt later on. Afterward—that is to say, in the course of the second century before Christ—a second attempt was made, but by a new generation of Greek physicians. They had come to treat the venereal diseases which the consul Cneius Manlius had imported to Rome (183 B.C.) after his victory over Antiochus the Great, king of Syria. Syria being a constant hot-bed of syphilis, the young Syrian girls who accompanied the army of Manlius on his return to Italy became excellent agents for its propagation. Syphilis at that time took on the epidemic form, as it did in the fifteenth century. The poet Lucilius cries: “Let us send back to the enemy this *pestilence* and scourge which the lame Manlius [has brought] to us.”

. . . Hostilibu' contra  
Pestem perniciemque, catax quam et Manliu' nobis.

But he does not say: “Let us be treated.” Superstitious practices took the place of rational therapeutics. The physicians were compelled to give way to dislikes, bad dispositions, and vexations of all kinds; they returned to Greece.

At that time all venereal diseases were confounded under the same term,—*shameful disease* (*morbis indecens, turpis morbus*, etc.). Ignoring the nature of the *Proteus of a thousand shapes*, the Romans did not suspect the diathesis, and employed different terms to designate the syphilides, according to their appearance, size, number, or location. Thus, the *mariscæ*<sup>1</sup> which occupied the anus were voluminous, obstructed the opening, and spread about its neighborhood; this description applies well to papulo-hypertrophic syphilides. The

<sup>1</sup> A species of large fig.



papular, vulvar, or preputial syphilides,—not so large,—and all syphilides in general were designated by the word *ficus* (fig). The word *fi*, or *fix*, in the Middle Ages, then *fic* (French for fig), which remained in the French language until the eighteenth century, but deviated somewhat from its primitive meaning, are directly derived from this word *ficus*. And what proves that this was the term used by the Romans is that it has furnished an adjective, *ficosus*, and even a superlative, *ficosissimus*, currently employed to designate the victims more or less affected by this notoriously venereal and evidently contagious disease. The origin of this term (*ficus*, *fici*, 2d decl.) is the reddish and granular appearance of the fig (*ficus*, *ficûs*, 4th decl.) when cut in two, and whose resemblance to the eroding papular syphilide of the genitals, the classical *mucous patch*, can be perceived by any one. At other times an epigrammatic poet will say, ironically, to a courtesan that she has pimples on her sexual parts (*aliquid prominet*,—something projects). Roseola and other exanthemata or pustules of the secondary period are designated by the expressions *maculæ* (spots), *pustulæ lucentes* (shining pustules), *sordidi lichenes* (foul eruptions), etc. As general terms, we find *scabies*, a word which has been translated *itch*, but which is most often employed in the sense of *ulcerated pustules*, and its adjective *scabiosus* (rotten), which indicates a more marked degree, and especially manifestations which are more generalized than *ficosus*, probably ulcerated gummata. It is also noticeable, in the same order of ideas, that the epithet *putridus* (putrid) was hurled as an insult. The *tristementum*<sup>1</sup> designated the disease localized on the chin and

<sup>1</sup> Grünbeck or Gründpeck, who issued in 1496 the first printed book on syphilis, appended as title, *De Mentulagra*. . . . Wendelin Hock



lower lip; the *ulcus putre, acre in ore* (putrid ulcer, virulent in the mouth), buccal syphilides; the *cæcum vulnus* (hidden wound), the *ulcus turpe* (shameful ulcer), had in view localized ulcerating syphilides of the genito-anal region, but especially those of the sexual organs. And ulcerated gummata of the vulva are to be suspected in the expression: *cunni vermiculos scaturientes* (crawling worms of the vulva.)

Venereal diseases, although "thrown in the shade," as Dufour says, "by the Greek and Roman physicians and naturalists," were none the less very numerous, always very stubborn, and often terrible. The author mentioned supposes, and with apparent reason, that religious motives prevented ancient authors from apparently classifying with the others these diseases of the genital organs which recognized debauchery as their cause. Æsculapius, the God of Medicine, was not to appear to engage in an open warfare with Venus by trying to neutralize the effects of the vengeance of the goddess; so that the patients, as if they had been loaded with infamy, concealed themselves for treatment, and addressed themselves either to Priapus or to Isis (Venus), or to magicians or venders of philters. Therapeutics was at that time reduced to prayers or to the use of a few plants. Certain patients preferred death to an acknowledgment of their disease. For ordinary physicians, the ancient Romans had slaves who were beaten if they did not cure and freedmen who paid a fine if unsuccessful; consequently, all refused to treat diseases

(1514) called his small work *Mentagra*, etc., which proves that the physicians who were contemporaneous with the epidemic knew the meaning of this Latin word. They were far from suspecting that the dermatologists of our time would appropriate the term *mentagra* to apply it to a skin disease localized in the same place (sycosis), but entirely removed from syphilis, for which the Romans had created it.



which did not appear to be able to get well in a short time, and notably venereal diseases. As to the physician, properly so called, it was quite an affair to call him in. As there were no hospitals, the clinic took place at the home of the client. The practitioner, if we are to believe Martial, arrived with ten, twenty, thirty, and sometimes one hundred scholars, according to his renown, who *all* examined the patient after their master. It is easily understood that the venereal individuals of ancient Rome, in view of this procedure, did not much care to contribute to the advancement of medical science in this way. Besides, the treatment, as we will soon see, was not always very mild. As to women, the principal sources of infection, it was a crime for them to uncover before any other man than their husbands, had it even been for a difficult labor. Strange prudery among a people in which obscenity presented itself officially. All these causes, taken together, sufficiently explain why sexual diseases were surrounded with so much mystery in antiquity. Celsus, who has described local symptoms, of which many refer to syphilis, has carefully refrained from employing the expression, *morbis indecens*; still, he knew, much better than the satirical poets of his time, that there existed a disease of genital origin,—with many forms, it is true, but always the same, and which was contracted in the same manner. The Romans were too proud of their robust health, as Dufour explains to us, to acknowledge these secret troubles; besides, it would almost have been offending Venus to devote, in a medical work, a special chapter to those diseases contracted in her worship. Celsus may have had cause to repent: and we see him, instead of openly treating of the disease of Venus, describe, as if unconsciously, some manifestations localized upon the organs of generation,



without drawing any conclusions as to the origin of these troubles. For Martial it was quite different; he was not a physician. His caustic epigrams were addressed to but one class of individuals, the debauched of both sexes; whilst Celsus, by christening the disease with a special name, scientific or ordinary, would have seemed to attack all Rome, and Rome would not have easily pardoned him. At that time, at least, the little buildings [urinals] to which Vespasian affixed his name had no cause to blush: they did not yet bear upon their inner walls, as a mark of shame, the pseudonyms of the professors of occasion, more or less diplomaed, who sell orvietan under the cover of the laws in the midst of the nineteenth century!

This is how Celsus approaches the subject:—

Now come the diseases which affect the shameful parts (*quæ ad partes obscenas pertinent*). The Greeks, to treat of this subject, have more appropriate expressions, which are besides consecrated by usage, as they are almost always employed by physicians, either in their writings or in their daily language. Ours are more shocking, and have not even the excuse of being occasionally found in the mouths of those who speak with decency; so that it is not an easy task to maintain the precepts of the art and respect propriety also. Nevertheless, this consideration has not been sufficient to prevent me from writing, first, because I desire to transmit entire the useful teachings which I have received; and because it is desirous to inform the people of the treatment of those diseases which are never exposed to another except against one's will (*quæ invitissimus quisque alteri ostendit.*)<sup>1</sup>

The diseases called *secret* were evidently known in Rome under the Emperors, but we see that Celsus promised himself to be reserved. He next gives a clear description of paraphimosis and of phimosis caused by preputial œdema; he employs none of these terms, but, as they are phenomena which almost always occur independently of syphilis, no one protests. The author also

<sup>1</sup> Aurelius Cornelius Celsus: *Medicina*, lib. vi, cap. xviii.



describes soft chancres, those which suppurate (*ulcera humida et purulenta*), and the other kind of chancres, which are dry and without suppuration (*pura siccaque*); finally, the phagedenic chancre, which is designated in full (*φαγέδαινα*). "When it is possible to bring the prepuce back," says the Latin text, "ulcers situated upon the internal surface of the skin are found, as well as upon the glans or on the organ itself; these ulcers are naturally clean and dry, or moist and purulent."

. . . *ulcera vel in cutis ulteriore parte, vel in glande ultrave eam in cole reperientur; quæ necesse est, aut pura siccaque sint, aut humida et purulenta.*

Those ulcers which are found when the œdema of the prepuce has disappeared are simply indurated chancres accompanied by soft chancres; and what proves that the first (*pura*) are not the second which have healed is that the author suggests a treatment for each one of these varieties. Celsus then gives the formula of the astringent treatment which he employs for ulcers of the natural parts, and he adds:—

. . . *Eadem autem compositio tonsillis, uvæ madenti, oris nariumque ulceribus accomodata est.*

. . . This preparation may also serve for ulcers of the tonsils, of the uvula, of the mouth, and of the nostrils.

These ulcers of the mouth were probably of the same nature as those of the genitals, as the author remembers them in giving his treatment, which he sees no reason to change. A little further on we read:—

. . . *Tubercula etiam quæ φύματα Græci vocant, circa glandem oriuntur.*

. . . There are also seen around the glans those tubercles which the Greeks call *phymata*.

The author takes care to observe, subsequently, that the symptoms he has described respecting ulcers "do not apply to gangrene, which is known by its black color in its inception."



. . . Hæc citra cancerum sunt. . . . Incipit a nigritia.

He then gives the conduct to follow in this last; then describes a variety of chancre in which it may become serpiginous (*serpiti*). In such a case, "when the ulcer extends irregularly in all directions," it must be excised:—

Si vero ulcus latius atque altius serpiti . . . .

As opposite, he describes, in the following paragraph, a small, *hard* pimple, almost *indolent*, and whose excision<sup>1</sup> he likewise counsels:—

. . . Occalescit etiam in cole interdum aliquid; idque omni pene sensu caret; quod ipsum quoque excidi debet.

. . . There is found something on the penis, in addition, which is *callous* and which is almost entirely devoid of *sensation*; this should also be excised.

In sections 9 and 10, the author speaks of certain diseases of the anus, such as hæmorrhoids, etc., and of others situated at the vulva; then he adds, in section 11:—

Fungo quoque simile ulcus in eadem sede (anus vel os vulvæ) nasci solet.

An ulcer resembling a fungous growth may also occur in these same parts (the anus or entrance of the vulva).

This certainly refers to papulo-hypertrophic syphilides, for the vegetations are not ulcerated. And it cannot be cancer, which Celsus describes quite well in a separate chapter of Book V, stating that it is rarely observed, except in the old (*cancer fit maxime in senibus*).<sup>2</sup>

There certainly exists great confusion in the descrip-

<sup>1</sup> Excision of the indurated chancre has been practiced at several periods, and notably about ten years ago, but not, as among the Romans, with the object of a local cure. It was proposed to prevent secondary infection; unfortunately, this attempt was not crowned with success. To-day some still contend that it is successful.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. v, cap. xxviii, sec. 2 and 3.



tion we have just read ; but the theory of the duality of the chancre with the distinction of each virus can certainly not be exacted from the author. He states what he has seen—and it is quite creditable to have been able to see—before the Christian era : that there were phagedenic chancres ; that is to say, circumscribed, with much suppuration ; then, again, others do not suppurate, and, finally, those whose principal characteristic is hardness and insensibility. To these last he even refuses the name of ulcers, for he frequently observed that this symptom is often less than nothing. The patients of our times, who come to tell us, as a simple precautionary measure, that they have *something on their penis* (aliquid in cole), do not express themselves differently from Celsus. It only remained for the Roman physician, to be twenty centuries in advance, to reduce these species, which he believed distinct, to two fundamental types.

Let us now consult the elder Pliny, or the Naturalist<sup>1</sup> who lived about A.D. 80. He gives us scientific details on the *triste mentum* and the *sordidi lichenes*, which Martial only barely mentions.

The author states that, at the time he was writing his works, diseases of the face, absolutely unknown before, were observed in Italy. It appears that they were disgusting affections of the face, showing themselves under various forms. The severest of all received the Greek name of *λιχήν* (*lichen*, darte vive) ; but, “ as it generally began on the chin, the Latins, as a joke, at first gave it the name of *mentagra* (from *mentum*, a chin), a name which it preserved.”

. . . latine, quoniam a mento fere oriebatur, joculari primum lascivia, mox et usurpato vocabulo *mentagram*.

<sup>1</sup> Caius Plinius Secundus : *Histor. natural.*, lib. xxvi, sec. 1 and 2 *et seq.*



This disease did not remain localized in the face, for Pliny adds that it "also descended upon the neck, the chest, and the hands, leaving dirty, *furfuraceous* [branny] *crusts*."

. . . descendente[m] vero et in colla pectusque ac manus, fædo cutis furfure.

They were probably pustulo-crustaceous syphilides. As to the contagiousness of this mento-labial affection, it is clearly indicated by the following phrase: . . . "propagating itself especially by the *rapid contact* of a kiss."

. . . proceres veloci transitu osculi maxime.

We hardly know anything but indurated chancres or mucous patches of the lips which are capable of transmitting themselves by this procedure. Besides, this disease must have been cousin-german to the *ulcer of Egypt*, for the author says that "specialists from that country, *the parent of affections of the same kind*, were sent for, and that these physicians did not attend to anything else."

. . . adveneruntque ex Ægypto genitrice talium vitiorum medici, hanc solam operam afferentes.

Let us remark that Pliny is astonished, just as they were in the fifteenth century, at these morbid symptoms, unknown from all antiquity (*ab omni ævo priore incognitos*). It might, perhaps, not be rash to conclude that syphilis has shown itself, in different places and at different times, as epidemics, in which one of its thousand and one symptoms predominated. Endemic among all nations, it passed, unperceived in ordinary times, in the midst of the different skin diseases which the Orientals and the Romans treated by hydrotherapy and sweating. Then, under an influence which has escaped us, it mani-



fested itself with such violence that the nation which suffered from the scourge believed it a disease unknown up to that time. This is why the Roman naturalist expresses his astonishment at two different recurrences, for he adds, a little farther on: "This *contagious disease* did not exist in the time of our fathers or forefathers."

Non fuerat hæc lues apud majores patresque nostros.

Was this not what the physicians contemporaneous with the epidemic of the fifteenth century said, in the same terms, but in a Latin much less pure? Pliny contends that the disease was brought from Asia by a Knight of Perusa, about the middle of the reign of Tiberius. Was it not also said, in the Middle Ages, that the Crusaders brought *leprosy* from the East?—Asia; this is the central focus of syphilis. In conclusion, let us cite the expression *gemursa*, a name which Pliny applied to a disease consisting of ulcers *between the toes*, which recall interdigital mucous patches.

Pliny the younger, a nephew of the other, wrote toward the end of the first century. He gives, in one of his letters, a story which tends to prove that certain Romans were not free from tertiary lesions. This letter, which is often quoted, was addressed to a certain Macer:—

Maritus ex diutino morbo circa  
velanda corporis ulceribus pu-  
trescebat.

A married man, *in consequence of an old disease*, had, in those parts of the body which should be kept hidden, *putrid ulcers*.

The wife of this unfortunate, born curious, insisted upon seeing this disease, and we must believe that she did not see anything re-assuring, for she despaired (*desperavit*) of any cure for her husband. She proposed suicide to him, and, to convince him, employed a means



which would, probably, be very little to the taste of women of our times, especially under analogous circumstances. "For," says the author, "she bound herself to her husband and threw herself in the lake (of Como), dragging him with her."

. . . Nam se cum marito ligavit, abjecitque in lacum.

We conclude from this story that the person of whom Pliny speaks had ulcerated gummata. Everything militates in favor of this hypothesis. In the first place, the author states positively that these sores were the result of a former disease, which was chronic; then, the lesions must have been grave and curable with difficulty, when we take into consideration the extreme measures adopted by the woman; and a phagedenic chancre would have healed without any deleterious recurrence, or could not have been concealed at the beginning of marriage. Then, there must have been a period of apparent health between the two manifestations of disease; and, among diseases of the sexual organs, syphilis is the only one which acts in that manner.

According to Herodianus,<sup>1</sup> the Emperor Commodus ended by contracting, in the midst of his debauches, "large tumors in the groins and numerous red spots on the face and eyes." While syphilis may be suspected in the vicious and cruel monarch, it cannot be affirmed.

Valerius Maximus (consul in A.D. 254), who wrote a few of the notable events of his times,<sup>2</sup> mentions a case in which syphilis is said to have played the principal part, according to some authors, who quote the passage

<sup>1</sup> Herodianus: *Histor. romana*. Roman History. He lived in the third century.

<sup>2</sup> Valerius Maximus: *Facta dictaque memorabilia*, lib. iii, cap. v, sec. 3. Collection of Events and Sayings.



without discussing it. It concerns a young man of the name of Pulcher, who simply died of indigestion (*intemperentia*), but, according to some commentators, in the course of a *chronic disease* characterized by *spots on the skin*, having lasted some time, and by a *cachectic state*, already well marked at the time of his death. Here is the text :—

Pulcher, præterquam quod enervem et frigidam juventum egit, perdito etiam amore vulgatissimæ meretricis infamis fuit, mortisque erubescendo genere consumptus est.

Pulcher, although having passed a quiet and cold youth, one day led a scandalous life, for he fell insanely in love with a low prostitute. (*He contracted a disease in which the body is covered with red spots, and died in a state of consumption.*<sup>1</sup>)

The author adds that death was caused by an *indigestion of pork paunch* (*abdomine avide devorato*); the glutton could not assimilate this mass of fat, and *gave up the ghost* (*spiritum reddidit*), together with the bacon.<sup>2</sup>

No doubt it may be asked why the author employed the expression *consumptus est*, which implies a slow death by gradual waste, when it was so simple to employ one of the numerous Latin expressions which signify *to die* (*mortuus est, abiit, interiit, morti occubuit, cecidit, etc.*). But this is not the question. This so-called proof of the antiquity of syphilis rests upon a beautiful misconception, and we are surprised that none of the partisans of the American origin has noticed it.

<sup>1</sup> We have placed this sentence in parenthesis, because we give a translation in conformity with the idea of authors who have quoted the Latin text without understanding it, as we will show farther on.

<sup>2</sup> Like Captain Tripet, of whom Rabelais speaks (*Gargantua*, chap. xxxv), who was killed by Gymnastes. “. . . wherewith he fell to the ground, and, in falling, gushed forth above four pottles of pottage, and his soul mingled with the pottage.”



These latter will not be able to apply that reproach of Human. "We would be tempted to believe," says he,<sup>1</sup> "that it is a weakness, common with all authors, to suppress truths which are opposed to the opinions they uphold." If Valerius Maximus had said *erubescente genere* (present participle), it could be translated: *of an eruptive form, characterized by redness*; but he has *erubescendo* (future participle), which means: *of which one should blush* [redden]. So that this Pulcher, given up to all the debaucheries, among them those of the table, "died in a disgraceful manner," a victim to his gluttony; and nothing warrants seeing a medical allusion on the part of the Latin author, if a strict translation be made. There could be no more legitimate or probable opinion than that the debauchee, of whom he speaks, had syphilis; but our impartiality leads us to look upon it as a duty to state that, from all appearances, the expression of Valerius Maximus did not imply this disease.

To end with medicine and history, we will give a few verses of Lucretius,<sup>2</sup> regarding the plague of Athens, which go to confirm the information transmitted to us by Thucidides. The Latin poet sung nature about 55 or 60 B.C., and in his description may be seen a few details having reference to venereal diseases, and, perhaps, to the tertiary lesions of syphilis. The victims of the scourge were not always attacked by the plague properly so called; there were *other manifestations* no less terrible; for, says Lucretius, positively (verse 1204 *et seq.*), "Did they avoid this impetuous torrent of

<sup>1</sup> Nosographie des malad. vénér. [Paris. Nosography of Venereal Diseases. The pseudonym Human conceals the name of a certain Dr. Michu, who wrote, it seems, about the year 1838.

<sup>2</sup> T. Lucretius Carum: De rerum natura, lib. vi. On the Nature of Things.



poisoned blood, the disease then threw itself upon the nerves, the joints, and even the *generative organs* of the body. And, fearing the terrible threshold of death, some lived by giving to the iron the remnants of their virility.”

Profluvium porro qui tetri sanguinis acre  
Exierat, tamen in nervos hinc morbus et artus  
Ibat, et in partes genitales corporis ipsas,  
Et graviter partim metuentes limina lethi,  
Vivebant ferro privati parte virili.

Before touching the free poems (elegies, odes, satires, and epigrams), it will be necessary, in order to understand the allusions, the jokes, the sarcasms, and especially the play upon words which they contain, to draw a rapid sketch of Roman customs under the Emperors; that is to say, during the first centuries of the Christian era. As our subject alone requires many explanations,—much more than we suspected, at first,—we are obliged to glance very rapidly at these accessory bits of information, which are, nevertheless, very useful. Those who desire to be fully edified concerning the incredible manners of our ancestors of the Latin branch can read with interest the works of Dufour, Villemont, Rosenbaum, and especially the most recent, that of Dr. Dupouy.<sup>1</sup> They will there find, concerning the Cæsars, who gave the tone, and the citizens, who imitated them, details that make one shudder, and in comparison with which the London scandals, reported by the *Pall Mall Gazette* (about 1885), appear as insignificant peccadilloes. Compared to ancient Rome, prudish Albion is yet more chaste than she would have us believe her. And to excuse ourselves of this rather

<sup>1</sup> La Prostitution dans l'antiquité. Paris, 1887. Prostitution in Antiquity.



shady study, which is, nevertheless, indispensable, we will say, with our immortal Molière<sup>1</sup> :—

Au moins je vois toucher une étrange matière,  
Ne vous scandalisez en aucune manière.  
Quoi que je puisse dire, il doit m'être permis ;  
Et c'est pour vous convaincre, ainsi que j'ai promis.<sup>2</sup>

Rome, which had subjugated the world, and for centuries had given an example of civic virtues, did not fail to let itself be invaded in turn, as St. Augustine says, by "Asiatic luxury." The monstrous debaucheries of the Orientals, which, at Athens, had only gangrened society in a relative manner, found a well-prepared soil in Latium. The people, intoxicated with conquests, thought of nothing but pleasure, and, finding, in the tribute and taxes imposed upon the vanquished, resources more than sufficient for their material wants, they wallowed in voluptuousness. Leaving the Greeks far behind them, the Romans distanced even the Asiatics, their masters. Every one knows the famous cry of the populace,—*panem et circenses* (bread and the circuses)! But it must not be believed that the Roman arenas were only used for gladiatorial combats and the repasts of fierce beasts fed upon human victims. There were other performances, in which lubricity was not only spread out with all the refinements of vice, but was clothed with an official character! We are speaking of the Floral festivals, whose origin and nature it is necessary to explain.

A courtesan, of the name of Flora, who had become

<sup>1</sup> *Le Tartufe*, act iv, sc. iv.

<sup>2</sup> The following lame rendition is offered with apologies :—

At least a strange matter I'm going to touch,  
And may ye all not show horror, I pray.  
It should be permitted, e'en if I say much ;  
It's just to convince you, as you've heard me say.



wealthy in the exercise of her profession, had liberally met, out of her own pocket, an important deficit in the public treasury. As a mark of gratitude for such disinterestedness, the representatives of the State instituted in her honor the annual festival which bore her name and recalled the origin of the *large sum* she had given. As a matter of fact, at a signal of the *ædiles*, the courtesans sprang into the circus, undressed themselves until they were naked, and assumed lascivious attitudes, amid the plaudits of a delirious populace. Amid the blare of trumpets, naked men jumped into the arena, and, says Dufour, "an awful *melée* of prostitution was publicly accomplished, amid the transports of the multitude." But there were men of austere manners, who were far from approving of these debauched irruptions of their fellow-citizens. The elder Cato, it appears, had ventured into the circus once, on one of the days they were celebrating the Floral games. Upon the notice of the *ædiles*, who warned him that they would begin, despite his presence, if he did not retire, he left, veiling his face. It must be acknowledged that, if syphilis had not already secularized itself by that time, it would have lost a splendid opportunity of making its entrance among the Europeans.

Religion also was a pretext for orgies. There were, in Rome, a number of temples which drew the debauched of both sexes, under the names of Temple of Isis (Venus), of Venus Voluptua (voluptuous), of Venus Salacia (lascivious), etc. The gardens of Priapus were also much frequented. This god was represented with a rigid penis of enormous proportions; this phallus was almost always made of wood, and that which was preferred was sometimes cypress, but generally that of the fig-tree (*ficus*, in Latin). We need not explain the



concealed meaning which influenced this choice. It was customary in Rome for intended brides to repair to the gardens of Priapus, before the nuptial ceremony, and sacrifice their virginity to the god, but in form only; so there was no actual defloration; nevertheless, the young betrothed was obliged to sit upon the enormous phallus in such a manner as to place its extremity in contact with her external genital organs.<sup>1</sup> There was, to tell the truth, nothing but simple contact, generally very short in duration, but sufficient, nevertheless, to propagate venereal diseases. They were virgins, you will say. Agreed; but, in answer, I will say that the contraband virgins, who, in our days, assume the more orange-blossoms the less worthy of them they are, must not have failed, in Rome, to make the obligatory pilgrimage to the gardens of Priapus, and there consummate, for the benefit of all, a contact which it was impossible to deny. Imagine one of these *ficosissima* (strongly contaminated), and the true virgin, who had come later, hearing Celsus saying, some time after, to the surprised husband, furious at having a chancre: *Occalescit* (It is hard)!

Men offered to Priapus the first fruit of their gardens, and addressed themselves to him to cure them. Then there were suspended about the statue *ex-votos* recalling the form (*consimilis*) of the organ; that is to say, a phallus. The women who had recourse to Isis

<sup>1</sup> This fact is reported by several authors, and notably by St. Augustine, in his book, *Civitas Dei*, lib. vi, cap. ix. [City of God.] This custom is certainly derived from India, for Duquesne reports (*Voyages dans l'Inde* [Travels in India]) that he *saw*, in a pagoda in the environs of Pondichery, newly-married women coming to the god to offer the sacrifice of their virginity. They were made to sit on a Lingam (the Indian Priapus) made of wood or of iron. But it appears that there were pagodas that were *more advanced*; for in those, says the author, "the priests, more adroit, robbed this god of his function which was so valuable."



filled her temple with analogous *ex-votos*, representing the organs of their sex. So that, as we have already said, the temples served two purposes,—sexual orgies in the evening, mystic treatment in the morning. It may be well to add that the male or female empirics, sellers of drugs, and peddlers of philters, overran with their business stands the approaches of these temples.

At all events, there were honest divinities. Venus herself possessed, in the twelve quarters of Rome, more suitable altars, under the names of Venus Placida, Venus Calvities, Venus Victoria, and many other Venuses who did not encourage prostitution. “They hardly tolerated it,” says Ménière, “in the priests, who gave themselves up to it secretly.” Considering the state of the manners of the Roman people, these divinities could be considered modest.

Considering these public dissipations authorized by law and religion, an idea may be formed of what private debauchery must have been. Here it is no longer luxuriousness, properly so called. It is not only the absence of all moral sense; it is the aberration of the genesic sense, and monstrosity in the glutting of abnormal desires. Would it be believed that pederasty was of daily occurrence in Roman aristocracy? In our days, the head of a family who respects himself and desires to be respected has the appearance of ignoring what are the dissipations of his growing son. He will occupy himself, to restore order, only upon that day when its abuse is made manifest, or it becomes a social danger. At Rome, on the contrary, it was the custom, in patrician families, to give to the young man who had arrived to puberty a [male] slave of the same age for a bed-fellow, so that he could satisfy, according to the expression of Dupouy, his first genesic impulses! This pseudo-mis-



tress was called a [*male*] *concupine* (*concupinatus*). This is so monstrous that it would be incredible did not Catullus say so in good Latin.<sup>1</sup> It makes one wonder if he is dreaming! So we will return to our quotations.

The poet, relating the marriage of Julia and of Manlius cries, addressing himself to the young man: "And thou, perfumed husband, it is very nice to say that thou regretfully givest up thy *beardless pets*; but thou must abstain."

Diceris male te a tuis  
Unguentate glabris marite  
Abstinere : sed abstine.

It may be concluded that these abnormal habits became inveterate; in truth, they persisted but too often after marriage.<sup>2</sup> Whose fault was it? Catullus himself acknowledges that the young married man is excusable; since, he adds: "You have never known, as we are aware, *any but pleasures which were permitted*; but a spouse should no longer taste of them; there are others."

Scimus hæc tibi, quæ licent,  
Sola cognita : sed marito  
Ista non eadem licent.

Then, what are to be the duties of the concubine in the future? Catullus will inform us. The poor concubine can no longer expect the caresses of his master; his only rôle after the nuptial ceremony consists, from that time on, in throwing nuts to the children: "Give nuts to the children, thou useless concubine."

<sup>1</sup> Caius Valerius Catullus, lx, *In nuptias Julicæ et Manlii*.

<sup>2</sup> This is clearly indicated in an epigram of Martial (lib. viii, ep. 44), in which the author advises the miser Titullus to live joyously instead of amassing money, for he will have to leave all behind on the day of his death: "Then, whether you wish it or not, your bereaved son will sleep with your *concupinatus* the first night."

"Tuoque tristis filius velis nolis,  
Cum cuncubino nocte dormiet prima."



Neu nuces pueris neget.  
 Desertum domini audiens  
 Concubinus amorem.  
 Da nuces pueris iners  
 Concubine . . .

It was the custom in Rome to throw nuts to the children when the bride entered the house of her husband. A trace of this custom may, perhaps, be seen in the baptismal confections thrown to children, in French country villages, upon leaving the church.

Will we be astonished, now that a Roman citizen, Callistratus, publicly married another of the name of Afer? "O, Rome! cries Martial, is it enough? Are you waiting for the fruits of such a union?"

. . . nondum tibi, Roma videtur  
 Hoc satis! expectas numquid ut et pariat?<sup>1</sup>

They only imitated the Emperors, who, believing that everything was permitted to them, furnished the example of all the crimes. Murder, adultery, incest, and prostitution protected themselves beneath the imperial purple! Was not Curio, quoted by Suetonius<sup>2</sup> in his history of the "Twelve Cæsars," enabled to say that the conqueror of the Gauls was "the husband of all the women and the wife of all the men?"

. . . omnium mulierum virum et omnium virorum mulierem.

Would any one dare describe the monstrous acts of Tiberius, which did not even respect infancy? Was not the infamous Nero seen wedding, amidst great pomp, young Sporus, whose virile organs he had caused to be previously removed? Was it not the same crowned lunatic who ravished, in the midst of a religious ceremony, the

<sup>1</sup> Marcus Valerius Martialis, lib xii, epigr. 42.

<sup>2</sup> C. Suetonius Tranquillus: Duodecim Cæsares; J. Cæsar, lxx.



two officiating priests?<sup>1</sup> Was not Heliogabalus, who did not go beyond the passive rôle, willing to give an empire to a slave of athletic form, whom he, also, had solemnly married? Let us stop, for it might be believed that we had drawn from a treatise on mental alienation, and not from the annals of the Roman Empire!

The reader, it seems to us, is sufficiently edified upon the moral state of the Latin people in Pagan times. It remains for us now to call attention to a few expressions which recur at every moment in the verses of the epigrammatists. These authors, as Darenberg remarks, always suppose a general knowledge of the fact in those who read them; and then, without a suspicion of the medical deductions which would be drawn from them sixteen centuries later, they limit themselves "to bringing out some conspicuous, ridiculous, and satirical point." Little mattered it to Martial that the debauched Nevolus had or did not have a contagious affection in the anal region; if the poet has spoken of this disease, it was because he was forced to in order to impress the fact that this personage was what is now in medico-legal parlance known as a *passive* [pederast]. In reality, this was the only thing considered degrading in Rome. One could act, but not submit, this latter condition being reserved for low slaves and *cinedæ*, to whose level one was reduced in imitating them. In an opposite condition, being given that pederasty was committed in Rome, we could not grasp the biting force of that epigram of the same Martial, the fierce raillery of which

<sup>1</sup> According to Suetonius, these were two brothers attached to the same altars. Nero, who noticed them, did not even want to wait until the end of the sacrifice to satisfy his revolting passion, and, as the brothers mutually twitted each other on their taint, the imperial monster caused their legs to be broken.



we will only hint at as to its meaning. The author reproaches a certain Amillus with leaving all his doors open when he receives large boys at his home; the conclusion is that Amillus likes to be surprised in the midst of his villainous occupation. "He who, in such a case, wishes to prove that he is not the patient, often does at another time that which may be accomplished without a witness (or without a testicle)."

Reclusis foribus grandes percidis, Amille,  
 Et te deprendi, quum facis ista, cupis;  
 \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*  
 Non pædicari se qui testatur, Amille,  
 Illud sæpe facit, quod sine teste facit.<sup>1</sup>

There is here a play upon words, easy to understand, between *testatur* and *teste*, the word *testis* meaning either *testicle* or *witness*. As to the terms *percidis* and *pædicari*, which could not be translated except by words of a revolting obscenity, they will give to the educated reader an idea of the energy of the satirical style of that time. The Latin language, with manners such as we have depicted, was, perforce, rich in terms concerning the different acts of current debauchery. The French (or English) language—at least the acceptable—does not possess all their equivalents, and the majority could only be rendered by periphrases difficult to employ, as Celsus says, and at the same time observe propriety. But, when one cannot approach an obstacle from the front, a flank movement is made; and, in the case which concerns us, scientific terms will be of great help when we cannot avoid a word of the greatest importance in our interpretation. So, like the physician of Rome, "we will not condemn ourselves to silence," just because we

<sup>1</sup> Lib. vii, epigr. 62.



have a difficulty to conquer; for the legend of the American origin of syphilis must be destroyed once and forever! It is our *delenda est*, and we cannot throw away the most valuable texts.

Sodomites were designated, in ordinary language, by the expressions *cinædi*, *pathici*, *pædicones*; they were the passive instruments of the unnatural lubricity of the debauched Romans. They had still another attribute,—active, though,—expressed by the word *fellare*, and then they took on the name of *fellatores*; the feminine *fellatrix* was applied to the courtesan who was sufficiently degraded not to recoil at these revolting acts. The verbs *irrumare*, *cunnilingere*, and *lambere* designated, according to the expression of Ricord,<sup>1</sup> “a certain prelude to the virile act;” whence the names *cunnilingus* and *irrumator*, given to the individual who gave himself up to these practices. So far as women were concerned, this last condition was, without doubt, much rarer in Rome than in the island of Lesbos, for Martial mentions but one strumpet, Philenis:—

. . . plane medias vorat puellas,<sup>2</sup>

says he, in a Latin which is too picturesque to dare translate it. Now, when we will have added, in order to terminate these edifying inquiries, that the Roman fish-ponds were open to all, and that men and women bathed in them promiscuously, without the smallest shred of covering or rag, we think the nauseated reader will have learned all that he should know to remain convinced that the Romans had syphilis. And we will add that they fully deserved it.

The oldest of the satirical poets is Caius Lucilius, an author very little known to us, but of whom Horace

<sup>1</sup> Lettres sur la Syphilis. Letters on Syphilis.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. vii, epigr. 67.



makes much ado. Lucilius was born about 148 B.C.; there remain of his poems but a few fragments, which are unconnected, and of which many have been collected as quotations in the works of authors who wrote after him. At all events, a few medical allusions of importance are found in them. In speaking of a decrepit old man, worn out by debauchery, he says that he may be seen "blear-eyed, the *pimples* and the *red eruptions going up to the eyes.*"

Illuvies scabies oculos huic, deque petigo  
Conscendere. <sup>1</sup>

We do not pretend to force the idea of syphilis from these verses; but it is interesting, in this respect, that he peremptorily demonstrates that the word *scabies* is not always applied, whatever may be said, to the itch proper.<sup>2</sup> In another passage, the general sense indicates that *scabies* designates a bad disease of the skin, and not the itching caused by the *acarus*. The author, speaking of women of a revolting appearance, says that he has seen a woman of the people "all squalid and covered with crusts." [The English "scab" and "scabby" are from the same root, *scabies*.]

. . . squalitate summa, scabie summa. <sup>3</sup>

It is probably not simple itch, either, that is to be seen in that unfortunate, "exhausted, eaten by ulcers, and covered with crusts."

Tristem, et corruptum scabie, porrigini' plenum.<sup>4</sup>

Here we have a physician speaking to his patient: "fearing that a *bubo* will form in the groin; not to be

<sup>1</sup> Satires, lib. xx, 6. This must be construed *depetigoque*. *Deque petigo* is a poetical license.

<sup>2</sup> The itch has *never* been seen on the face; so it cannot "go up to the eyes."

<sup>3</sup> Sat., lib. xxvi, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Sat., lib. xxx, 70.



inconvenienced by *papules, tumors, swellings of the legs.*"

Inguen ne existat ; papulæ, tama, ne boa noxit. <sup>1</sup>

The end of the sentence being missing, the verse of itself is sufficiently vague ; but we may be permitted to think of syphilitic lesions,<sup>2</sup> for the patient, a little further on, says to the physician : " This white spot annoys me, but it does not hurt."

Hæc odiosa mihi vitiligo est, non dolet, inquit.

Is this the pigmentary syphilide, the pseudo-vitiligo of the neck? Dupouy, who has published an interesting study on the Latin poets,<sup>3</sup> concludes for syphilis from this passage of Lucilius.

Catullus, who lived about 50 B.C., outside of his elegies and epithalamia, has also written some trenchant epigrams, in which are found allusions to syphilis. He apostrophizes a thievish courtesan in a manner whose medical meaning can be understood by everybody : " *Rotten faggot, return me my tablets !*"

Mæcha putida, redde codicillos. <sup>4</sup>

Further on, he brands the manners more than loose of Julius Cæsar, after the conquest of the Gauls. " They are well made to understand each other, those two frightful Sodomites, Mamurra the passive and Cæsar. For truly—the one at Rome, the other at Formiana—both have contracted a *disease* whose *marked*

<sup>1</sup> Fragments, xxii and xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> It is probably in this sense also that the sentence of Seneca, which has become a proverb, and which is analogous to the beam which is always seen in the eye of a neighbor, should be interpreted. " The *papules* in others shock you, when you yourselves are covered with *ulcers.*" (Papulas observatis, obsiti plurimis ulceribus.)

<sup>3</sup> Médecine et mœurs de l'ancienne Rome. Paris, 1885. Medicine and Manners of Ancient Rome.

<sup>4</sup> Epigr. xlii.



spots have left upon their bodies stains which *will not disappear*. Both *infected*, and together in the same bed."

Pulchre convenit improbis cinædis  
Mamurræ pathicoque, Cæsarique.  
Nec mirum : maculæ pares utrisque  
Urbana altera, et illa foramina,  
Impressæ resident nec eluentur.  
Morbosi pariter, gemelli utrique ;  
Uno in lecto. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Such is the Latin text, with its inconvenient clearness for the partisans of the American origin, who cannot change it. Let it be translated in any manner, the words are there, clear and limpid ; to try to demonstrate that this roseola, contracted in the bosom of debauchery, was of syphilitic nature, would be to cause a loss of value in the verses of Catullus, which are sufficiently eloquent of themselves. Let us add, for the delectation of the public, that the poet, when asked to dine by Cæsar, accepted the invitation and discontinued his invectives.

Tibullus, an elegiac poet who wrote a few years later (42 B.C.), addresses a prayer to Isis, which attests a venereal disease, without our being able to determine which one. "Now, Goddess, help me, for thou canst *heal* me; the many paintings hung in thy temple teach this."

Nunc, dea, nunc succurre mihi : nam posse medere  
Picta docet templis multa tabella tuis.<sup>2</sup>

We have already stated that the temples of Isis, like those of Priapus, were filled with votive paintings, and that these paintings represented solely the sexual organs which were cured. The faithless Delia had, doubtless, left poor Tibullus a painful *souvenir*. And this invoca-

<sup>1</sup> Epigr. lvii.

<sup>2</sup> Albius Tibullus, lib. i, Carmen 3.



tion of the poet proves pretty well that there existed in Rome diseases of genital origin common to both sexes, and apparently transmissible. Otherwise Tibullus would not have addressed himself to Isis, whose temples contained only feminine *ex-votos*. He knew then that the goddess was competent in his particular case, the difference in organs having no influence upon the nature and progress of this venereal disease.

About the same time (40 B.C.) appeared the works of Horace, the most celebrated of the Latin satirical poets. In one of his odes, in which, as a Roman citizen, he rejoices at the death of Cleopatra, we find verses which lead one to think that the soldiers of this African had contagious diseases. "Whilst a queen, having assembled a horde of vile soldiers affected with a *shameful disease*, insanely prepared to reign over the Capitol, and already attended, in hope, the obsequies of the empire."

. . . dum Capitolio  
Regina dementes ruinas,  
Funus et imperio parabat  
Contaminato cum grege turplum  
Morbo virorum.<sup>1</sup> . . .

The word *contaminatus*, meaning *besmirched*, *withered*, can hardly be explained otherwise than by syphilis, a *disease* sufficiently visible to be noted in a group (*grege*) of individuals whom it *besmirched*. We know that the conception of withering was only applied, among the Romans, to venereal diseases, and that they were easy on the score of morality. It really requires good will, or the previously made opinion of Astruc, to regard the word *morbis* (disease) as being always in a figurative sense, and translate it always *vice* when it is suspected to be related to the genital apparatus. "The

<sup>1</sup> Quintus Horatius Flaccus, Carm., lib. i, 31.



warriors of Cleopatra," says he, "were sodomites, and this fact alone does not prove that they had the pox."<sup>1</sup> We agree, but neither does it prove the contrary.

In a satire of the same author, we see a clown twitting a certain Cicirrus about a disease upon whose nature there has been much discussion. The Roman of whom Horace speaks had upon the left side of his forehead a disgusting scar, which disfigured him:—

. . . Illi fœda cicatrix  
Setosam lævi frontem turpaverat oris.<sup>2</sup>

The word *turpaverat* (had disfigured, soiled) has for its root *turpis* (shameful), which implies the idea of debauchery, so far as it relates to the origin of the trouble. The author proceeds to give us the name of this venereal disease: "Having joked him a great deal about his *disease of Campanum* about his face."

Campanum in morbum, in faciem permulta jocatus. . . .

If we do not lose sight of the fact that Campania became later the kingdom of Naples, it will be apparent, as many authors have pertinently remarked, that those who, in the fifteenth century, called syphilis the *Neapolitan disease*, in fact, translated the expression *morbus Campanus*. Platner, a German author of the eighteenth century, wrote a monograph<sup>3</sup> to prove that the Campanian disease was syphilis. Dupouy specifies the nature of the disease, and sees in it the modern *corona veneris*, which is quite admissible.

Finally, in the *Ars Poetica*, in verse 453, is found the word *scabies*, employed to designate the most terrible contagious disease,—the one to be most feared:

<sup>1</sup> Astruc: *De Morbis Venereis*. Lutetiæ Parisiorum. On Venereal Diseases. Paris, 1740.

<sup>2</sup> Sat., lib. i, 5.

<sup>3</sup> J. Z. Platner: *De morbo Campano ad verba Horatii*. Lipsiæ. On the Campanian Disease of which Horace Speaks. Leipzig, 1732.



“Just as one flies from and takes good care not to touch a man having *bad pimples*.”

Ut mala quem scabies. . . . urget,  
. . . . tetigisse timent fugiuntque.

Above this, in verse 417, children were seen to use this expression, which has become a proverb: “The dirty pimple for the last !”

Occupet extremum scabies. . . .

Juvenal, who was not yet born when the preceding poets had already died, wrote about A.D. 42. He affords us but one document relating to venereal diseases. He becomes indignant at a hypocritical cinædus in one of his satires: “Darest thou rail at obscenity, thou, the best-known cess-pool of the Socratic band! The male exterior, it is true, and those hairy limbs lead to the belief of a virile soul; but the physician who cuts off the tumefied *mariscæ* of thy epilated anus smiles with a mocking air.”

. . . . Castigas turpia, cum sis  
Inter Socraticos notissima fossa Cinædos :  
Hispida membra quidem, et duræ per brachia setæ  
Promittunt atrocem animum; sed podici lævi  
Cedundur tumidæ, medico ridente, mariscæ.<sup>1</sup>

These anal products, especial to passive sodomites, were evidently contagious, since they excited the smiles of the physicians, who divined their origin. Hæmorrhoids have nothing laughable about them; as to vegetations, they are not contagious, and it is known that they may show themselves, even abundantly, in the most honest woman, under the sole influence of pregnancy. In man, want of cleanliness, an irritating cause, may equally suffice. *Mariscæ* answer much better for hypertrophic (*tumidæ*) syphilides than anything else. On

<sup>1</sup> Decimus Junius Juvenalis, sat. ii.



the whole, the treatment of the Romans was brutal. It has been more willingly abandoned in our days, as internal treatment would suffice, in case of necessity.

Twenty years later, under the reign of Nero (about A.D. 65), we see the works of the two satirical poets, Perseus and Martial, appearing almost simultaneously. Although the style of Perseus is entirely different from that of Martial, and that obscenity in the language of the former is as rare as it is frequent in the other, there may, nevertheless, be caught on the wing, so to speak, a few caustic allusions, which certainly refer to venereal, if not syphilitic, lesions. And we are certainly astonished not to see them noticed by any of the authors who are partisans of the ancient origin. Dupouy, alone, has noticed in the second satire an allusion to the *rotten race of Messala* (*Messalæ lippa propago*<sup>1</sup>). The word *lippa*, which is applied to a disease of the eyelids, recalled to the mind of the author a shameful disease which apparently affected a certain Cotta Messalinus, a descendant of Messala. This Cotta, according to Tacitus and Titus-Livius, and even of Cicero, had exhausted himself by all "the excesses of debauchery; he carried its *shameful traces* upon his face; his eyelids were eaten by humors, and they turned out." It is on account of this testimony that Dupouy thought himself justified in translating the word *lippa*, which literally means *having eyes full of humors*, by the adjective *rotten*. Besides, the illustrious general, Messala, had no luck with his line; it was also from him that the famous Messalina descended. This nymphomaniac empress, deserting the couch of Claudius, the imbecile Cæsar, passed all her evenings in the "smoky antrum of a brothel," under the

<sup>1</sup> Aulus Persius Flaccus, sat. ii.



alias of Lycisca, and only left with regrets," says the poet, "exhausted, but never satisfied."

Et lassata viris, sed non satiata recessit. <sup>1</sup>

In Satire III of Perseus, verse 113, we find the part of a sentence which, being given the general tone of the discourse, relates to a disease which was not acknowledged, and which may lead to a suspicion of a secondary lesion: "Thy tender mouth conceals a *putrid ulcer*."

. . . tenero latet ulcus in ore  
Putre . . .

We are surprised that Dupouy did not see in this word *ulcus* anything but *aphthæ* of the mouth; it is true that he forgot to translate the word *putre*, or he would have immediately observed that *aphthæ*, which never infect, could not render the thought of the author. We would have more easily understood the diagnosis *ulceromembranous stomatitis*; but this special disease of children, which is relatively rare in the adult, does not warrant the ironical tone of Perseus. In the same way, in verse 43 of Satire IV, the author alludes to an ulcer of venereal origin, but situated this time on the genital organs. "Thou hast a *secret wound* lower down than the hips."

. . . Ilia subter  
Cæcum vulnus habes. . . .

Here, again, the mocking tone of the whole satire proves very well that this implies what is called, in our days, using an analogous metaphor, a *kick from Venus* below the belt. In verse 57 of Satire V, the poet designates general infection of the organism. "That one is *rotten* by debauchery."

. . . ille  
In venerem est putris. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Juvenalis, sat. vi.



Finally, in Satire II, this part of a phrase is met :  
 “He is covered with *ulcers*; an acrid bile swells him.”

. . . namque est scabiosus, et acri  
 Bile tumet. . . .

We will see further on, respecting Ausonius, what the pathological value of the expression *scabiosus* was, for the Romans.

Let us now examine Martial, one of the most licentious authors of antiquity, but one whose works furnish us with the richest collection of documents. The reader now knows, after the short sketch of Roman manners which we have given, what he may expect. Nevertheless, we will make it a rule, in translating, to be correct in the medical sense of the word, while forcing ourselves, at the same time, in being persuasive, from the point of view of the thesis we are sustaining. We will first examine the texts which treat of venereal diseases without prejudging their nature. In this line of ideas, we first find the oft-quoted epigram concerning a passive sodomite, who transmitted contagious lesions to a youth :  
 “Thy young slave *ails in his penis*; thou, Nævulus, it is at the *anus*; I am not a magician, but I know thy habits.”

Mentula quum doleat puero, tibi Nævole, culus :  
 Non sum divinus, sed scio quid facias.<sup>1</sup>

This disease, which Martial mentions solely to prove the *passiveness* of his personage, may be referred either to syphilitic lesions or to soft chancres. The puerile objection may be made to us that the allusion is to a pain of the irritated parts, but the text itself proves the contrary, for contagion is manifest.

<sup>1</sup> Marcus Valerius Martialis, lib. iii, epigr. 71.



Further on the reference is to a courtesan celebrated by her sculptured beauty, and whom Martial denounces as dangerous for idle youth; but he does not specify the nature of the *professional* disease which she had. "I recommend you, Rufus, to beware lest Chiona read my little book. She is *wounded* by my verse; but she also *can wound*."

Ne legat hunc Chione, mando tibi, Rufe, libellum.  
Carminē læsa meo est; lædere et illa potest.<sup>1</sup>

It is the same case with that other play upon words, which is a little more complicated, in which the author speaks of a disease of the penis, whose nature he does not specify. "The Greek Baccara confided to a physician, his rival, the care of *curing his penis*; Baccara will become a eunuch (or a Gaul)!"

Curandum penem commisit Baccara Græcus  
Rivali medico; Baccus Gallus erit.<sup>2</sup>

The *finesse* of this rests upon the double meaning of the word *gallus*, which means *priest of Cybele, castrated, or Gaul*. This Greek was going to change his *nationality* in losing his *virility*, as a result of his imprudent confidence, just as a horse who has been castrated takes on the name of a Hungarian horse,<sup>3</sup> although he may never have left the soil of America. We hope that our apparently trivial comparisons will be pardoned, but we are forced to make them in a way, for a pun in a foreign language is always difficult to understand; and Martial, who is accustomed to this, affords us others which are more obscure, and which we will explain later on.

Now, are we to see terrible lesions of tertiary syphilis or an ulcerated epithelioma in that horrible disease which led a Roman knight to suicide? Either opinion

<sup>1</sup> Lib. iii, epigr. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. xi, epigr. 74.

<sup>3</sup> In French a gelding is called a *cheval hongre*, whence the above.



may be defended. "The throat shamefully attacked by a *cruel* and devouring *disease*, which made fatal progress in his face, Festus, without shedding a tear, consoled his weeping friends and resolved to visit the banks of the Styx."

Indignas premeret pestis quem tabida fauces  
Inque ipsos vultus serperet atra lues ;  
Siccis ipse genis flentes hortatus amicos  
Decrevit Stygios Festus adire lacus.<sup>1</sup>

We do not receive any more information as to the nature of the malignant virus which caused the death of Demetrius, the *confidant* slave of Martial. "When the *impious disease* consumed its victim."

Ureret implicitum quum scelerata lues.<sup>2</sup>

Further on, it is *tumors* of which Martial reproaches a debauchee. They were certainly venereal, and they were chiefly found in the *priests of Cybele*, eunuchs who submitted themselves to passive sodomy.

It appears that these tumors were *ulcerated* ; and, as they have taken the name of the country whence they came (Syria), papulo-hypertrophic syphilides, or, rather, ulcerated gummata, may be seen in these. "I have not said, Coracinus, that thou wert a sodomite. . . . I swear it by thy *Syrian tumors* ; . . . what I have said is a notorious fact, which thou thyself wilt not seek to deny ; I have said that thou wert a *cunnilingus*."

Non dixi, Coracine, te cinædum ;  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Juro per Syrios tibi tumores,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Quod notum est, quod et ipse non negabis ;  
Dixi te, Coracine, cunnilingum.<sup>3</sup>

One thinks immediately of that special perfume of

<sup>1</sup> Lib. i, epigr. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i, epigr. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. iv, epigr. 43.



syphilitic angina for the bad odor of the mouth which Martial has noted in *fellatores*, *cunnilingi*, and *pædicones*; these individuals were, as a matter of fact, more often at the source of the disease than others. The author addresses a certain Fabullus: "Thou sayest that pederasts have a *bad breath*."

Pædiconibus os olere dicis.<sup>1</sup>

The author had already attacked a certain Zoilus, to whom he certainly owed a grudge, and at whom he had flung this burning insult: "Thou sayest that lawyers and poets have a bad breath; but, Zoilus, it is still worse in the *fellator*!"

Os male caussidicis et dicis olere poetis;  
Sed fellatori, Zoile, pejus olet.<sup>2</sup>

Precocious tertiary lesions might be surmised for the disease of the young Canaca, the beautiful child whose epitaph Martial wrote. The age of this young victim of the debauchery of the time excludes all idea of cancer.<sup>3</sup> "Here the manner of death is more mournful than the act itself. A *horrible disease* has destroyed her face; it has located itself upon her delicate mouth; the *cruel disease* has devoured that place of kisses and snatched from the funeral pile almost entirely her childish lips!"

Tristius est leto leti genus: horrida vultus  
Abstulit et tenero sedit in ore lues;  
Ipsaque crudeles ederunt oscula morbi  
Nec tota sunt nigris tota labella rogis.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lib. xiii, epigr. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. xi, epigr. 30.

<sup>3</sup> In 1881, we had occasion to observe in the Hôpital de Lourcine (salle Astruc), acting as substitute for an interne, a girl of 20 affected with an ulcerating syphilide, which had destroyed the alæ nasi. The tertiary lesions had shown themselves a *few months after the chancre*, and the cicatricial contraction ended in atresia of the nostrils. The patient remained in the hospital several years. We will hasten to state that it is the only case of the kind, so far as the grave nature of the lesions is concerned, which we had an opportunity of studying since we have seen syphilitics; that is, since 1873.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. xi, epigr. 91.



The following epigram fixes us as to the nature of the term *ficus*; it can be well seen that the principal manifestation of the disease consisted of venereal ulcers, and that the infected individual (*ficosis*) was a danger to his neighbors. In this *syphilitic family*,<sup>1</sup> the virus spread like a train of powder: "The wife has *figs* (I should say, *syphilides*); the husband has *figs*, the daughter has *figs*; the son-in-law and the grandson also have them. The steward, the farmer, the farm-hand, and the plow-man are all attacked by this *shameful ulcer*. Thus all, old and young, have *figs*; this is quite surprising, for there is not a *fig-tree* in their field."

## DE FAMILIA FICOSA.

Ficosa est uxor, ficosis est ipse maritus,  
 Filia ficosa est, et gener atque nepos.  
 Nec dispensator, nec villicus, ulcere turpi,  
 Nec rigidus, fossor, sed nec arator eget.  
 Quum sint ficosi pariter juvenesque senesque,  
 Res mira, ficos non habet unus ager.<sup>2</sup>

Martial, according to his custom, relates this pathological case merely to have an opportunity of perpetrating a pun. The humor lies in the words *ficus*, a fig-tree,

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, cases of this nature are not rare. In 1874, being attached to the service for venereal diseases at l'Hôpital St. Sauveur, at Lille, we had occasion to cauterize the anal and buccal syphilides of an individual, and, at the same time, those of his son, a lad of 10 or 12 years, in the same ward. Upon questioning the man as to the origin of the child's syphilis, he informed us that his wife and little daughter, 5 years of age, were in the same condition. The same sponge was used by the entire family! The syphilis had passed from the father to the mother, and from her to the children. On the other hand, our colleagues at l'Hôpital St. Antoine, in 1879 (service of M. Duguet), must certainly remember a woman, aged 65, who had, just beneath the nose, a beautiful indurated chancre, followed by roseola, etc. She was a snuff-taker, whose upper lip, irritated and frequently fissured, presented a favorable surface for the absorption of the virus which her son, whose sores (of syphilitic nature) she dressed, very innocently transmitted to her. She had forgotten to wash her fingers before taking her snuff.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. vii, epigr. 71.



which produces *figs*, and *ficosus*, he who has *figs*, the fruits of an imaginary but productive tree, which is called in our days the *syphilitic virus*. An epigram, in which Martial makes Priapus speak, justifies this manner of seeing the matter: "I am not of fragile earth, and this rigid column is not of a wood taken at haphazard; it is made of a cypress full of life. . . . Whoever thou art, O, miserable one! Beware of it; for if thy rapacious hand wound, in ever so little, one of the branches of this vine, the cypress will, in spite of thee, graft a *fig-tree* on thy body."

Non sum de fragili dolatus ulmo ;  
 Nec quæ etat rigida. . . .  
 De ligno mihi quolibet columna est,  
 Sed viva generata de cupresso ;  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Hanc tu quisquis es, ô malus timeto :  
 Nam si vel minimos manu rapaci  
 Hoc de palmite læseris racemos ;  
 Nascetur, licet hoc velis negare,  
 Inserta tibi ficus a cupresso.<sup>1</sup>

This *point*, as it was called in the time of Louis XIV [and in ours, among English-speaking people], may be explained as follows: The fictitious *fig-tree*, grafted on the profane man, will make him gather a crop of actual fruit which will be not figs, but *figs* [condylomata]. Ode 42 of the *Priapidæ*, whose translation we will give later on, and the new pun of Martial, which we will notice, prove that the two meanings we have given to the word *ficus* were really in the minds of the Latin poets. "Because I have used the expression *ficos* [condylomata], you laugh at me, Cecilianus, as if I had committed a barbarism, and you pretend that *ficus* (contraction for *ficues*, figs) should be used. We will call *ficus* (figs)

<sup>1</sup> Lib. vi, epigr. 49.



the fruit which grows upon the tree we know (the fig-tree); but for *those which grow upon thy body* we will employ the word *ficos* [condylomata].

Cum dixi *ficos*, rides quasi barbara verba,  
Et dici *ficus*, Cæciliane, jubes :  
Dicemus *ficus*, quas scimus in arbore nasci :  
Dicemus *ficos*, Cæciliane, tuos.<sup>1</sup>

The vulvar pimples of the vulva, which the author attributed to the courtesan Laufeia, must have been analogous *fruit*; and, if she refused to go to the bath with him, it was doubtless out of fear that he should see them. And Martial asks himself if this is ill founded prudery, "or if her ulcerated groins show a gaping hole, or if she has not upon her genitals *something which projects.*"

Aut infinito lacerum patet inguen hiatus,  
Aut aliquid cunni prominet ore tui.<sup>2</sup>

Those who wish to contradict will not fail to see falling of the womb, with procidentia of the uterine cervix, in that "something projecting at the labia majora." But prolapsus uteri is something exceptional in courtesans, who rarely are parturient, and, at all events, is quite incompatible with their mode of living. Martial, who has reviewed the physical imperfections which this member of the *demi-monde* might present (pendulous breasts, wrinkled skin, etc.), then begins the list of diseases, the buboes of the groins, and the eruptions of the genitals. In the mind of the author, it must have been a venereal disease which Laufeia did not wish to expose, for obvious reasons. The paraphrase of Martial indicates hypertrophic mucous patches. As to warts, they are too small a matter to be compared with the "gaping wounds of the groin;" so that it is

<sup>1</sup> Lib. i, epigr. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iii, epigr. 72.



more rational to think of *ficus*, the classical disease. And we are quite sure that Laufeia, in reading this biting epigram, did not ask herself a second time what these *pimples* were which the poet might attribute to her.

Here are now a series of expressions which designate divers groups of cutaneous syphilides, of which some are localized in the face and chiefly in the mouth. With what the elder Pliny has informed us, considering the depraved manners of ancient Rome, and on account of the mania for kissing which then held sway, there is room to believe that more than one indurated chancre of the lips was the prelude of this varied symptomatology. The satirical poet, like Molière, becomes incensed at these "givers of frivolous busses;" but, if these produced, in the reign of Louis XIV, nothing but the indignation of Alceste, they had, in the days of Martial, somewhat more serious consequences. "There is no way, Bassus, of escaping the givers of kisses. . . . Neither the *malignant ulcer*, nor the *shining pustules*, nor the *mournful disease of the chin*, the *disgusting eruptions*, . . . or the *congealed drop from the nose*, can prove a sufficient obstacle for them."

Effugere non est, Basse, basiatores.

\* \* \* \* \*

Non ulcus acre, pustulæve lucentes,

Nec triste mentum, sordidique lichenes,

\* \* \* \* \*

Nec congelati gutta proderit nasi.<sup>1</sup>

When everything which precedes has been read, can any one decently, like certain authors, see a cancer of the tongue in the *shameful disease* of Manneius. That libidinous individual, whose exploits we will pass by in

<sup>1</sup> Lib. xi, epigr. 98.



silence, only to retain the pathological fact, evidently contracted a venereal disease which was directly transmissible; and cancer has never been contagious, nor considered venereal. We will not produce entire the too forcible text of Martial: . . . “A *shameful disease* has condemned to rest that insatiable organ; now *Manneius can no longer be pure or impure.*”

Lingua maritus. . . .

Partem gulosam solvit indecens morbus :

Nec purus esse potest nec impurus.<sup>1</sup>

Here again we find a pun, which the author cannot resist making; it is between *purus* and *impurus*: the debauchee can no longer be *pure*, physically; that is to say, healthy, which implies a vitiated blood, a *general* infection of the organism. He cannot continue to be impure, morally; that is, shameless, since the *local* manifestation of the disease stops it short. So that those who have seen a paralysis (*solvit*) in this disease have made a contradiction, for one may have a labio-glosso-laryngeal paralysis without ceasing from being healthy (*purus*). Now, as the chancroid is not seen in the cephalic region,—or, at least, never has been, in a positive manner, outside of experimental inoculations<sup>2</sup> made to verify this fact,—we are compelled to conclude that the *indecens morbus* of the Romans was syphilis. Was it not an analogous adventure which happened to Zoilus, who has already been mentioned, that emulator of Manneius whom the poet pities in such an ironical manner? “An evil star has suddenly *struck* thy tongue, Zoilus.”

Sidere percussa est subito tibi, Zoile, lingua.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lib. xi, epigr. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Conf. Follin : *Traité de path. ext.*, t. i, p. 639. *Treatise on Surgical Pathology.* Nadau des Islets : *De l'Inoculat. du chancre mon à la région céphalique.* Thèse de Paris, 1858. *On the Inoculation of Chancroid in the Cephalic Region.*

<sup>3</sup> Lib. xi, epigr. 85.



In order to make an end of Martial, we will explain two more puns in which the word *ficus* naturally plays the principal part. "Labienus has sold his gardens to buy young slaves; now Labienus has but one *orchard of fig-trees* (or *field of figs* [condylomata])."

Ut pueros emeret Labienus, vendidit hortos,  
Nil nisi ficetum nunc Labienus habet. <sup>1</sup>

To appreciate the meaning of this satirical quip, it must not be forgotten that these young boys were destined to the same end as the pets (*mignons*) of Henry III, but with this difference: that the Roman slaves were forced to submit, whereas the assassin of the Duke de Guise only had the embarrassment of a choice among the young lords who surrounded him. It was as to which one, among the *court butterflies*, as they were called, would offer his complaisance to the royal pederast. Labienus, to arrive at the same result, had to sell his land. Martial, in a joking way, tells him that he exposes himself to another harvest. As a matter of fact, the word *ficetum* changes its meaning according to its root; if it is derived from *ficus*, *ûs*, it will signify, like *ficaria*, plantation of fig-trees; if the root is *ficus*, *i*, the dictionary translates it: "body covered with figs."

We know that *ficus* is a warty, rounded, ulcerated, and contagious excrescence. This is the appearance of the ordinary mucous patch; and still one cannot, and for a good reason, wonder excessively that Martial did not use the expression "syphilide." In the mind of the poet, the concubines bought by Labienus for a low purpose might, on account of their repelling duties, become, like prostitutes in our times, the *ficetum*; that

<sup>1</sup> Lib. xi, epigr. 33.



is to say, centres of syphilis. The allusion is still more obscure in the following epigram, which would mean nothing to us if it were not picked, so to speak, word by word: "If thou dost not cease, Hedylus, to be carried by two joined *goats*, thou, who wast only a *fig-tree*, wilt become a *wild fig-tree*."

Gestari junctis nisi desinis, Hedyle, capris,  
Qui modo ficus eras, jam caprificus eris.<sup>1</sup>

The pun bears upon the double meaning of *ficus* (*condyloma*, or *fig-tree*) and of *capra*, which means *goat*, or *prostitute*. In our days, the language of the streets also designates these unfortunates by the names of animals. At Rome, in Latin slang, they were called *lupa* (she-wolf), whence *lupanar* [brothel], a word which has become French, and *capra* [French, *biche*; Anglicé, *doe*, *cat*], etc.; so that the meaning which is understood is as follows: "If thou dost continue, Hedylus, to live constantly with two low girls, thou (*fig-bearer*) who hast already seen venereal buds (*ficus*) grow upon thy person, wilt not delay in reaping a virus of slums (*caprificus*); that is to say, everything that is grave among diseases contracted in crapulous debauchery." Such is the interpretation we propose to make; it seems difficult to express otherwise the meaning of this sentence, which would mean nothing, translated literally, according to the classic meaning. Our terms are sometimes somewhat raw, but it will be perceived with us that, the subject being given, it is very difficult to make puns understood in an idiom no longer spoken, by limiting one's self to the language of *salons*. The majority ignore the antiquity of syphilis, many deny it, whilst we, with

<sup>1</sup> Lib. iv, epigr. 52.



a few others, uphold it. Proofs are wanted ; we give some.

We will now examine the *Priapeia*,<sup>1</sup> which supplement, in a sort of a way, the epigrams of Martial, and furnish us with valuable information. The *Priapeia*, an anonymous work, constitute a collection of light poems addressed to Priapus by numerous authors, and which were composed at different epochs. On the whole, they were inscriptions found upon stones which ornamented the gardens of Priapus, or on the base itself of the statue of the god. The Padua edition, which we refer to, is one of the most complete.

One of these odes, in which the author makes Priapus speak, bears witness to the habit which poets of the time had of making verses for the god of the gardens. "Let every one of those who come here become a poet, and let him dedicate light verses to me. He who fails will walk *covered with figs* among poets who are expert (in erotic subjects)."

Quisquis venerit hic, Poeta fiat :  
Et versus mihi dedicet jocosus.  
Qui non fecerit : inter eruditos  
Ficosissimus ambulet Poetas.<sup>2</sup>

Here is an alternative clearly laid down : anacreontic verses or a severe syphilis ; choose ! The following ode, in which is found a pun of which we have already spoken, might be Martial's, for it is in his manner and style : "The farmer Aristagoras, delighted with the success of his vines, offers the waxen fruits. But thou, Priapus, who art content with the image of the fruit which is sacred to thee (the fig), contrivest so that this peasant carries upon his body *genuine fruits* (*ficus*).

<sup>1</sup> *Priapeia* : Sive diversorum poetarum in Priapum lusus. . . . Patavii, 1664. *Priapeia* ; or, *Lusus of Different Poems on Priapus*.

<sup>2</sup> *Carmen* 14.



Lætus Aristagoras natus bene villicus uvis  
 De cera facta dat tibi poma, Deus.  
 At tu, sacrati contentus imagine pomi,  
 Fac, veros fructus ille, Priape, ferat.<sup>1</sup>

These *fruits* were no doubt analogous to those of Cecilianus, of which Martial speaks. (See page 193.)

In another place we find that the treatment was often terrible, and still that the disease, upon a prayer to Priapus, that is, when left to itself, could cure spontaneously. Evidently diet and hygiene were the cause of the cure, without receiving any credit therefor; but this is a way in which syphilis often acts. It is an *ex-voto* whose inscription we give: "You ask why the organ which has procreated us is represented on a votive tablet? When my penis was *seriously damaged*, when, unfortunate, I feared the *hand of the surgeon*, I did not dare address myself to those of our gods who are connected with medicine, such as, for example, Apollo and his son Æsculapius. They are too awful, and it seemed very presumptuous in me to ask them to *cure my penis*."

VOTI SOLUTIO.<sup>2</sup>

Cur pictum memori sit in tabella  
 Membrum quæritis, unde procreamur.  
 Cum penis mihi forte læsus esset,  
 Chirurgique manum miser timerem,  
 Dis me legitimis nimisque magnis,  
 Ut Phæbo, puta, filisque Phæbi,  
 Curatum dare mentulam verebar.

The unfortunate patient then addresses himself to Priapus, and asks him to remedy the organ which, in his statue, is represented as equal in size to the rest of his body, and of which he is the tutelary deity: "If thou curest me *without amputation*, I will cause to be painted the organ which thou hast relieved, and I will

<sup>1</sup> Carmen 42.

<sup>2</sup> Carmen 37.



dedicate the picture to thee. The representation will be similar to the original in every respect, not only as regards size, but also form and color." The god promised, made a sign of acquiescence, and "*fulfilled my wish.*" Any other god would have moved the head, but in Priapus this was not the most important part.

Qua salva sine sectione facta,  
Ponetur tibi picta, quam levaris,  
Parque, consimilisque concolorque  
Promisit fore : mentulam <sup>1</sup> movit  
Pro nutu deus, et rogata fecit.

A lover's prayer demonstrates to us in a peremptory manner that, among the venereal diseases, *ficus* was the reigning one, and the one to be most feared. Besides, it is always this which Latin authors put forward when it concerns a divine threat, an injury, or a contagion to be feared, in frequenting intimately the women of the *demi-monde* of the *Via Appia*, the Boulevard des Italiens of ancient Rome. The young adorer of the female in question is in for the expenses of his gallantry ; as he is amused with fair words, and the psychological moment never arrives, he begins to think that there is something mysterious underlying it all. He then asks himself if she is not in *full syphilitic bloom*, which would explain everything. "Is it not your opinion, Priapus?" he cries. "This young beauty, who makes me jump around, must be *covered with figs*, for she grants me no favor, telling me that she will not always refuse. In the meantime, she finds some pretext each time to put me off to a later day."

<sup>1</sup> Whence the word *mentule* [yard], which is so often found in writings of the Middle Ages: "And drawing out his mentule into the open air, he so bitterly all-to-be-pissed them that he drowned two hundred and sixty thousand four hundred and eighteen," etc.—*Gagantua*, chap. xvii.



Quædam, si placet hoc tibi, Priape,  
 Ficosissima me puella ludit,  
 Et non dat mihi, nec negat daturam ;  
 Causasque invenit usque differendi.<sup>1</sup>

As, despite all, he is much taken up by her, he promises Priapus crowns of flowers if he succeeds, without fixing the date. This would seem to imply that *ficus* was curable, and that the disease ceased to be contagious at a certain time. Those venereal ulcers in which worms occur can hardly be explained, except as ulcerated gummata of the genitalia or as phagedenic chancres. The anonymous author addresses himself to a prostitute given over to all the debaucheries: "Daughter of the streets, thou who art not more sincere than a Moor, but more depraved than all the sodomites." He ends by saying that it would require at least ten handfuls of garden-rocket<sup>2</sup> to clean the holes which he has in the groins and scrape out the *worms which crawl* in her genitals.

O non candidior puella Mauro,  
 Sed morbosior omnibus cinædis.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Erucarum opus est decem maniplis,  
 Fossas inguinis ut teram, dolemque  
 Cunni vermiculos scaturientes.<sup>3</sup>

A satirical poet, Ansonius, who lived A.D. 340, that is to say, nearly three centuries after Martial, has left us a few light poems (free epigrams), among which we have noticed one which we are surprised not to find noticed by any author. When we examine it closely, and without any preconceived idea, a generalized syphilis may be detected in it. All translators have rendered the word *scabies* by *itch*, without noticing that frequently—and

<sup>1</sup> Carmen 50.

<sup>2</sup> An aphrodisiac plant sacred to Priapus.

<sup>3</sup> Carmen 46.



especially in this particular case—they found themselves in the face of a generic term concerning a disease whose principal symptoms were characterized by true ulcerated tumors, and even by loss of substance in certain localities. Never did the itch produce *putrefaction of the limbs*,—a phrase of Ansonius which applies much better to ulcerated gummata than to anything else, being given, as we will see, that the limbs were not the only parts attacked. Varicose, scrofulous, and other ulcers have their sites of predilection either on the limbs or in the lymphatic glands, etc.; cancer localizes itself; itch itself respects the cephalic region; syphilitic manifestations alone can manifest themselves everywhere at the same time under the most varied forms,—vegetating, pustular, crustaceous, or ulcerating. Besides, the adjective *scabiosus*, according to the dictionary, signifies, primarily, *rough, pimply*, sometimes *scabby*, and, most often, *rotten*. We see it, as a matter of fact, applied by Latin authors to individuals covered with tetter, crusts, and ulcers. We will translate as follows: “Against Polygitonus, the *rotten*. When Polygitonus has been seen, seated in his bath-tub, bathing the *ulcers* of his limbs *gangrened by the virus*. . . . He moves his arms, his chest, his legs, his sides, his belly, his thighs, his genitals, his calves, his back, his head, his shoulders, and the soiled opening of his symplegada (his anus); the *cruel disease* invaded these *different* regions, going from one to the other.”

IN SCABIOSUM POLYGITONEM.<sup>1</sup>

Therमारुम in solio si quis Polygitona vidit  
 Ulcera membrorum scabie putrefacta foventem,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Brachia deinde rotat. . . .  
 Pectus, crura, latus, ventrem, femora, inguina, suras,  
 Tergum, colla, humeros, luteæ symplegadis antrum :  
 Tum diversa locis vaga carnificina pererrat.

<sup>1</sup> D. Magnus Ansonius : Epigrammata, 108.



Among the Romans, who employed general terms to designate groups of skin diseases resembling each other in their entire appearance, certain benign cases of syphilis must have often been confounded with itch, properly so called, and *vice versâ*. Certain ecthymas, in filthy individuals having the itch, must certainly have been considered as manifestations of the *indecent morbus* upon the least indication that the sheath of the penis, as is the rule, was the seat of pustules. On the other hand, many light roseolas must have passed for insignificant forms of the itch, the expression *mala scabies* being reserved for malignant forms of syphilis. Besides, let us remember that, in the Middle Ages, syphilis was called the *bad itch*; so there must have been a degree of similarity, but rather complicated. A trace of this is found in the saying which everybody knows: "You may drink out of my glass, I haven't got the itch!"<sup>1</sup> If the disease produced by the acarus was alone concerned there would be no *raison d'être* for the popular saying, for, we repeat it, itch is *never* found upon any part of the head. Those who, under similar circumstances, employ the term, certainly are ignorant of its origin; but it had reference in the beginning—let us not doubt it—to a contagious disease of the mouth, and especially of the lips. This disease may have been called *scabies*<sup>2</sup> by the Romans, but, at all events, it had no relation with the sarcoptes.

<sup>1</sup> Tu peux boire dans mon verre, je n'ai pas la gale !

<sup>2</sup> One thing which cannot be denied is, that the majority of the authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries employed this word to designate the *new* (to them) disease, which was the great event of the time. Ulsenius (1496) designates syphilis under the name of *scabies epidemica*; Fallopius (1564), under that of *Gallica scabies*; he was an Italian physician. Bourdigné (*de Morb. Vener.*, 1529) says that "the French called it the *great pox* and *itch of Naples*," etc. Besides, let us not forget that the translators of the Bible have employed the word *scabies* to express the sense of a Hebrew word meaning contagious, hereditary pimples difficult to cure,



To terminate our study on the venereal affections in Rome, we will examine a poet who is little known, and who came after Ansonius. This is Claudianus, who wrote about A.D. 395. In a long diatribe against a certain Rufinus, the author imagines his character going to Hades before the famous tribunal. There Eacus reproaches him with being tainted by all the crimes. "The spots impressed upon thy chest are a blighting mark, which constitute a *proof* of thy vices."

. . . in pectus inustæ  
Deformant maculæ, vitiisque inolevit imago.<sup>1</sup>

A detailed clinical description cannot be required of a poet; but, outside of syphilis, we cannot see what could be the disease capable of proving the debauchery of an individual by showing itself in the form of spots upon the chest!

Claudianus, however, does not furnish us only more or less debatable allusions. But, as he has affected more particularly the epic style, and as his detached poems are epithalamiums, epistles, panegyrics, or idyls, and his epigrams relate more especially to political events, no one has noticed that, among the last, there was *one* in the style of Martial. It is one of the rare documents upon which no one has depended to demonstrate the antiquity of syphilis, and it is, perhaps, the only one which defies all objections. Last year, one of my friends who succeeded me at Lourcine in 1879, and with whom I was discussing the manner of interpreting the epigram against

and seated at the margin of the anus (Deuteronomy, xxviii, v. 17). And is it *itch* which "goes up to the eyes" of that old man of whom Lucilius speaks (v. *supra*). As to the familiar expression which Roman children employed to excite themselves in races (occupet extremum *scabies*), it recalls this exclamation, so frequent in Rabelais: "May the fire of St. Anthony burn you!" . . . We will see later on that St. Anthony's fire and the disease of the burning (*feu des ardents*) were syphilis.

<sup>1</sup> Claudianus: *Invectives Against Rufianus*, lib. ii.



Manneius, said: "It is very probable that you are right; Martial wished to designate syphilis by his expression *indecent morbus*. For me, as well as for many others, the antiquity of the disease is not doubtful. But it will be objected to you, and with force, that in this case it is cancer of the tongue; and you will not be able to refute this opinion with any possible reply, seeing that there is only a local lesion present. If the author had said that this disease of the mouth had been followed by lesions of a similar character in other remote regions, it would be another thing!" Well, my dear D., meditate upon the case of Curetius, and conclude.

The epigram of Claudianus, which is composed of two parts, alludes to a disease gotten by a single contact and developing itself in two opposite places. At all events, we will limit ourselves to a simple medical discussion of this pornographic text, for the least timid modesty would recoil in terror before a complete translation. Latin sometimes braving honesty too much, we leave it to the caution of the reader to read between the lines. Claudianus recalls to his fellow-citizens that a certain Uranius, who was an augur, had amassed riches by deceiving his contemporaries by means of the organ of speech; and, says he, "it is with the same organ that his son dissipates them." In truth, this Curetius often gave himself up to intimate gossips with expensive young women (*meretrices*), the hetairæ of Rome; and this life, if we are to believe Claudianus, had its inconveniences. . . . "The son has in his mouth a *disease* which is the *just punishment* (*pœnam merito filius ore luit*)." It may be objected that here the word *pœnam* signifies *punishment*, and nothing else, and that we may translate thus: "punishment by the mouth," which changes the meaning, and constitutes a *moral* chastise-



ment; that is to say, the ruin which cannot fail to cap the climax. Besides, what would seem to re-inforce those who contradict us is the final verse: . . . “ruining his house by his prodigalities and shameful debaucheries.”

Consumens luxu flagitiisque domum.

But let us abide our time. Between the two verses which we have just quoted there is another one which explains in energetic terms where this *contagious disease* may have been acquired; and one reason which appears peremptory to us, if the punishment should have consisted in the loss of fortune, there would have been *meritus* instead of *merito*. It is the guilty part which bears the punishment; hence, it is a local disease. Put in *meritus*—which in no wise changes the metre—and we will acknowledge that nothing but a total ruin can be thought of; but as soon as there is *merito*, even if the author did not say more, it is that Curetius had either a chancre of the lip or buccal syphilides; this cannot be avoided. However, here are the three verses alluded to in the order in which they follow each other:—

Et pœnam merito filius ore luit :  
Nam spurcos avidæ lambit meretricis hiatus,  
Consumens luxu flagitiisque domum.<sup>1</sup>

*Spurcos hiatus* literally means *infectious openings*; but these orifices are infectious because they have been *infected*,<sup>2</sup> and the proof of it is in the revenging virus (*pœnam*) which attacked the *ore merito* of Curetius. It is exactly the history of Manneius, as related by Martial, but with this difference, that Claudianus notes a second stage in the history of his character.

<sup>1</sup> Epigrammata, In Curetium.

<sup>2</sup> Guillaume de Salicet (1270) employed the word *fæda* (spoiled) in the same sense applied to a woman capable of transmitting a contagious disease.



In the second part, addressing Curetius himself, the author states that he will be more sincere than his father Uranius, and that he will indicate to him the stars under whose influence have been engendered his vices and diseases. He owes his madness to Mars, and it is Saturn which causes him to dissipate his riches; "as to the *shameful disease* which is situated in his *anus*, where may be seen the signs of premature age, it is the work of Luna and of Venus, female stars."

Quod turpem pateris jam cano podice morbum,  
Femineis signis Luna Venusque fuit.

This disease, which first appears as a contagious affection of the mouth, as we have seen in the first epigram, and which afterward reacts upon the organism in such a manner as to show itself similarly at the *anus* (*podice*); this *shameful* (*turpem*) disease, what can it be except syphilis? There is not even a means of invoking the possible coincidence of another local contagion, such as chancroids, for example; for, if Curetius had been a sodomite, Claudianus would not have hesitated to reproach him with it. On the contrary, he says plainly by what means his character has contracted the disease: *lambit hiatus*. He even insists upon this etiological cause, for he recurs to it in his second epigram. As a matter of fact, in the last verse, he asks himself to what star Curetius can owe this habit, and he designates the *hiatus* by its name.

Hæreo, quæ cunnum lambere causa facit.

As everything must be expected, perhaps there will be chicanery about the expression *jam cano* (already white), which accompanies *podice*. Those who contradict us will certainly see in this discoloration of the hair (premature age) an indication of passive sodomy in



Curetius. We will content ourselves by replying that it proves precisely the contrary; for we know, from the testimony of authors of that time, that the *pathici* (and there were enough in Rome!) epilated themselves to more conveniently ply their degrading traffic. "For whom epilatest thou thyself, Labienus?" cries Martial.

Cui præstas culum, quem, Labiene pilas? <sup>1</sup>

In another place, the same poet ridicules Chrestus the Bald, who has the "head more polished than the rim of the anus in sodomites."

Et prostitutis lævius caput culis. <sup>2</sup>

Was it not from an epilated anus (*podice lævi*) that the physician of whom Juvenal speaks excised large mariscæ? Quotations could be multiplied, but those given are sufficiently demonstrative. Hence, if the incriminated region could have whitened on account of its abnormal functions, it would have been impossible to observe it, and Claudianus would not have written *jam cano*. Q. E. D.

Such are the documents, mostly secular, which we have been able to obtain after three years of research, which was at times laborious. We will feel compensated for our endeavors, and will have fully attained our purpose if the reader finds himself drawn to the following conclusion, which is our deepest conviction: SYPHILIS DATES FROM THE CREATION OF MAN.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ii, epigr. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. ix, epigr. 28.



## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

#### RATIONAL TREATMENT OF SYPHILIS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Guéris du soir au lendemain,  
Et content du syphilicure,  
Les dieux donnèrent à Mercure  
La bourse qu'il tient à la main.

—SACOMBE.<sup>1</sup>

Cured from eve till morn,  
And with this satisfied,  
The gods to Mercury have borne  
The purse that to his hand is tied.<sup>2</sup>

SYPHILIS, the daughter of prostitution, was born as soon as Commerce, chasing Love, presided over the exchange of caresses. The venereal virus must have marked the first step of the human race on the highway of civilization. This is what leads us to believe that India must have been its cradle. The race of Aryans, a migratory people which furnished inhabitants to Persia, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt, spread itself over Europe. It required many centuries for these erring hordes to become organized into nations, to cultivate the arts, sciences, and letters; but syphilis continued to remain among them in an endemic state. For, if a few thousand years sufficed to wear off their savage source, nothing availed against the venereal disease, which is, in a sort of a way, inherent to our species. Will syphilis become a quantity to be disregarded at that day when each one, armed with the hereditary principle, will oppose to it a soil

<sup>1</sup> La Vénusalgie. Paris, 1814.

<sup>2</sup> The indulgence of readers is asked for this attempt at rhyming on the part of the translator. The translation, however, is approximate.



inaccessible to the reigning virus? Is it destined to become extinct by the very fact of the succession of beings? These are theoretical problems whose verification could not be made materially possible except outside of the human species, and animals are almost always refractory; but even here the final word cannot be given, perhaps. Happy the scientific man who, advancing beyond the works of his time, might endow his century with the *true* vaccine of syphilis!

But, while waiting for the discovery of this liquid,—much more useful than that of Brown-Séquard [or of Koch, we are tempted to add],—syphilitics must be treated. And on this account we are going to examine the different methods of treatment actually employed, discussing their merits, and point the most effective and practical.

Syphilis, like all constitutional affections which are accompanied by external manifestations, requires general treatment; that is to say, an internal treatment and a local or external treatment.

#### GENERAL TREATMENT.

The treatment which addresses itself to the entire economy is by far the most important; since, if, necessary, as we have already said, it would be sufficient. As a matter of fact, it is the only one directed against the virus, as it is destined to be absorbed and carried to all the tissues by the torrent of the circulation. We have already stated (Chap. I) that the two great therapeutic agents, *mercury* and *iodine*, constitute the basis of treatment. We will now explain how the metal and the metalloid act, under what forms they can be administered, and we will then give formulas recognized as the best in the actual state of science.



Without entering into the discussion brought up by certain dissenters, who, in a spirit of contradiction, or from calculation, have declared themselves as antimercurialists, we will say, once for all, that *mercury* is recognized, nowadays, as the *only specific* remedy for syphilis. When we study the sexual pathology of the Middle Ages,<sup>1</sup> we will see that this metal was employed as a remedy from the epidemic of Naples (1494), and many years before the *thick itch* (*ad scabiem crassam*), which was nothing else but classic syphilis. This fact is related by Fracastor, a contemporary of the epidemic, and that physician supports himself upon an old manuscript of the first centuries of the Christian era. The preparations of iodine are next in point of importance; then come the tonics and hygiene, excellent adjuvants. Let us follow the three periods, and let us see what course should be pursued in general and in certain particular cases.

*The First Period.*—This is characterized, as has been seen, by the appearance and evolution of the primary lesion; that is to say, one or sometimes several indurated excoriations, which persist for one or two months. We will repeat that there is an object in beginning mercurial treatment as soon as possible; that is to say, as soon as a diagnosis can be made in a certain manner. Then hygiene is recommended to the patient, and his moral state is to be taken care of also, if it is necessary. The most *tempé* man always experiences a disagreeable mental sensation when the physician tells him that he is syphilitic. The legend, which is not very re-assuring, although exaggerated, and which attends the word *pox*, and especially the prospect of a treatment always long; the social consequences; the

<sup>1</sup> F. Buret: *La Syphilis au Moyen Age. Syphilis in the Middle Ages* 1891.



worries of a being who ceaselessly fears an irremediable catastrophe,—all this is not calculated to bring peace to the soul. So that the duty of the physician is, first of all, to re-assure his patient as to the consequences of his disease. He should, without making a course of syphilography, which would be tiresome, enumerate the principal possible symptoms of the disease. He will call the attention of his patient to the fact that the word *terrible* is seldom applied, nowadays, except to the lesions modeled in wax and carefully preserved in the museum of the Hôpital St. Louis; that one is not forced, fortunately, in his quality of a syphilitic, of posing as a model of the genus by presenting on his person the entire series of venereal manifestations; finally, that he is to make up his mind in reference to the matter, and that he is far from being the only one of his kind. When the patient has acquired the certainty that he cannot walk the boulevards without encountering hundreds of syphilitics who are not so badly off; when he has exchanged confidences with his friends situated as he is, and whose appetite, muscular strength, etc., are unimpaired, he will take courage and be treated, which is the essential thing.

If you have to do with a debilitated, lymphatic, or strumous individual, predisposed to cachexia, tonics are indicated in the form of a maceration of gentian or of quassia amara (a wineglassful before each meal). This medication is simple and cheap. For those who cannot take anything bitter, we prescribe very advantageously the following :—

℞ Vini gentianæ,  
Syr. cort. aurant. amar., . . . . . āā p. æ.

Ft. sol.

Sig. : A small wineglassful ten minutes before each meal.



Then, *after* eating,—and not before, to avoid cramps,—it will be well to take a liqueurglassful of wine of cinchona made by a good pharmacist. Good food, in sufficient quantity, exercise without fatigue, regular habits, and sobriety in all things, are the indispensable adjuncts of a well-directed treatment.

Let us now see how specific treatment may be given. In the sixteenth century the first thing employed was rubbing in mercurial ointment. This treatment, based upon cutaneous absorption, is still employed to-day, and it is useful in certain cases in which rapid effects are desired, but rarely at the beginning of syphilis. Several drawbacks are connected with it. It is not pleasant, as it soils a great deal; it rapidly starts up a local irritation and mercurial stomatitis, with salivation; and only the approximate quantity of mercury employed can be estimated. The stomatitis, which was considered useful in the sixteenth century, caused troubles of a serious nature, which largely contributed to the discredit in which mercury is held. We will study this interesting question later on, when we occupy ourselves with the syphilographers of the three centuries preceding our own. Mercury has also been employed in fumigations, in the form of cinnabar, which was roasted, as it is still done by the Chinese; but this method has been entirely abandoned in our day.

Many years later, ingestion by way of the stomach was tried, and, if we are to believe history, it was Francis I who, in France, took the first mercurial pills.<sup>1</sup> These were very mercurial in composition, but are completely neglected nowadays. The best known are

<sup>1</sup> He obtained their formulæ from Barberossa, a celebrated Algerian pirate. This new treatment was especially begun and praised by Paracelsus, a renowned physician of that time.



Belloste's pills, the *blue* pills, and Sedillot's pills. Later on, mercurial salts were caused to be absorbed, and this method was based upon the reasonable assumption that mercury, to be absorbed, must be first combined with the gastric fluid or intestinal secretions in such a manner as to produce, if not a *salt*, chemically speaking, at least a soluble substance. A flood of preparations then arose. The principal are protiodide of mercury, in the form of pills; the biniodide of mercury, most often combined with iodide of potassium (Gibert's syrup); protochloride of mercury, or calomel; and the bichloride of mercury, or corrosive sublimate. The cyanide and the tannate of mercury have also been suggested; but these two latter preparations do not enjoy the popularity of the others, of which we will speak more in detail.

The protiodide of mercury owed and still owes its use in current practice to Ricord. Although adopted by many syphilographers, we never prescribe it, for the following reasons: In the first place, it almost always brings on enteritis; this irritation of the intestines manifests itself in the form of severe colics and diarrhœa; besides, it often causes mercurial stomatitis. It is only by giving opium and chlorate of potassium that it can be tolerated; some patients are forced to abandon it. Another reason makes us prefer corrosive sublimate. As it is proven that mercury, no matter in what form it is administered, does not pass into the circulation until after its change into bichloride, it has appeared to us—as to many others—more rational to give it in that form, which obviates the work of a laboratory on the part of the digestive via. The best method consists in giving the sublimate in solution in the proportion fixed by Van Swieten, the Dutch physician. Bichloride rarely excites stomatitis; as far as we are concerned, we *never* saw a



case; this is a point of some importance. Besides, it does not bring on colic, except in large doses. But, eventually, it irritates the stomach, a complication which may be avoided by the addition of opiates in very small doses. Van Swieten's liquor (a 1-to-1000 solution) is the simplest, the most economical, and most employed solution. It is given in tablespoonful doses daily after some meal. Unfortunately, it leaves an after-taste which is disagreeable, which patients state is *coppery*; so that we prescribe a solution of half the strength, of which we give two tablespoonfuls daily, which amounts to the same thing.

℞ Hydrargyri bichloridi, . . . . .	0.25
Alcoholis (90°), . . . . .	50.00
Ext. thebaici, . . . . .	0.35
Aquæ destillat., . . . . .	450.00

Ft. sol.

Sig. : A tablespoonful at each meal in a half-tumblerful of water.

If necessary, the following may be employed, which patients find to be almost agreeable :—

℞ Hydrargyri bichloridi, . . . . .	0.12
Alcoholis (90°), . . . . .	25.00
Syrupi codeini, . . . . .	50.00
Syrupi florum aurantii, . . . . .	175.00

Ft. sol.

Sig. : A tablespoonful in a half-tumblerful of water before each meal.

If, despite these expedients, the syphilitic experiences an insurmountable disgust, the classic pills of Dupuytren<sup>1</sup> are given, which we advise, in the interest of the stomach, to modify as follows :—

<sup>1</sup> Dupuytren's pills each contain three-twentieths of a grain of bichloride, three-tenths of a grain of extract of opium, and three-fifths of a grain of guaiac.



℞ Hydrargyri bichloridi,	
Sodii chloridi, . . . . .	āā 0.60
Ext. thebaici, . . . . .	1.00
Gluten. recent., . . . . .	q. s.

M. ft. pilulæ no. lx.

Sig.: One pill before each meal.

Solution, mixture, pill,—all are combined in such a manner that the patient takes three-tenths of a grain of bichloride daily.

About ten years ago it was proposed to cause the absorption of mercury by hypodermatic means. Martineau advocated this method and abandoned Van Swieten's liquor in his service at Lourcine. All the syphilitics were treated by means of subcutaneous injections of ammonio-peptonate of mercury. No abscess or mercurial stomatitis occurred; and, as the injections are in the back, they are not painful. This method may be regarded as not very practical, requiring the *daily* attendance of the physician. Nevertheless, it may be a valuable resource in cases where the stomach is profoundly wrecked, and in which, for some reason or other, we might not wish to prescribe mercurial frictions. This treatment, which is rarely employed—in private practice, especially—except in a temporary way, is of the greatest value in certain malignant cases of syphilis; it is for the enlightened physician to judge of its necessity. For our part, we owe several successful treatments to this method, used in unfortunate cases, in which ordinary means had not materially changed the condition of the patient.

*Second Period.*—This is characterized by more or less numerous manifestations, which show themselves upon the skin and mucous membranes; as we have enumerated them in Chapter I, we will not repeat them.



The internal treatment is exactly the same as in the primary period; if it has not already been begun, it should be done immediately.

In a general way, the patient can easily stand his bichloride treatment for three consecutive months. At all events, the physician will do well to watch the digestive functions and suspend medication for a few days upon the slightest indication of impaired nutrition. At the end of these three months, if the cutaneous manifestations or those of the mucous membranes are decreasing, a *therapeutic rest* of three weeks or a month may be prescribed, for it is well to know that the physiological action of mercury continues for a certain length of time after its use has been stopped, as it is eliminated little by little by way of the secretions. Then the solution or pills are taken again for two months with two other months of rest, and so on for a year or two, according to the case. In a general way, the first year of the syphilitic requires six months of treatment and six months of rest, which time he uses in fractional parts, alternately. It is plain that we are not speaking of those exceptional cases, in which the physician is the sole judge as to any modification of this method, which is the rule. The second (or third) year is generally devoted to the mixed form of treatment, also given in an intermittent manner, and which consists in the use of the combination of mercury and the iodides.<sup>1</sup>

One of the best preparations employed for this pur-

<sup>1</sup> Mixed treatment is indicated during the first year if precocious tertiary lesions are seen, this being a rare occurrence. [I have seen gum-mata of the iris appear two months after the roseola.] It is also useful in certain cases of very intense cephalalgia, which appears most often during the evolution of the chancre or at the beginning of the secondary period. Still, it is well not to abuse the iodides; and, most often, mercurial treatment can be continued with advantage up to the third or even fourth year of the disease.



pose is, without doubt, the syrup of Gibert, which contains in each tablespoonful (a dose for a day) one-sixth of a grain of biniodide of mercury and nearly eight grains of iodide of potassium. Frictions with blue ointment may also be used, giving, at the same time, iodide of potassium or of sodium, in doses of from eight to fifteen grains a day. Iodides are given in solution or in the form of a syrup:—

1°. ℞ Potassii iodidi,  
 Melissæ alcoholat. comp., . . . . āā ʒiiss.  
 Aquæ fontis, . . . . q. s. ad ʒx.

M. ft. sol.

Sig. : A tablespoonful contains gr. viiss of iodide (to be largely diluted in water).

2°. ℞ Potassii iodidi, . . . . ʒiiss.  
 Syr. cort. aurant. amar., . . . . ʒix.  
 Aquæ destillat., . . . . ʒj.

M. ft. sol.

Sig. : To be taken like the solution.

For the succeeding years, unless there are indications to the contrary, the treatment should be limited to two months at each change of season. The patient must not permit himself, as so often happens, to be lulled into a deceptive security, for he is always exposed to disagreeable relapses ; and, upon the slightest indication, he should consult his physician, who will judge, from the nature of his symptoms, if the disease has entered upon its tertiary phase.

*Third Period.*—The tertiary period especially demands the iodides, given in doses of fifteen, thirty, forty-five, or even ninety grains daily, according to the gravity of the lesions. As a general thing, it is sufficient to take fifteen grains daily for two months, in



spring and autumn.<sup>1</sup> But, in the presence of a gumma (ulcerated or not), the physician may, when necessary, carry the dose up to three-fourths or a drachm daily. He should add mercurial frictions, if it is a gumma of the brain, which manifests itself either by paralyses (hemiplegia, aphasia) or by epileptiform attacks. Exostoses also require mixed treatment (Gibert's syrup or mercurial frictions and iodides internally). In those cases, which, happily, are rare, of necrosis of the bones of the nose and of the palate, and of rebellious ulcers, it is the iodide which is indicated, in doses varying from one to one and one-half drachms (Ricord). It is understood that the patient is to be toned up by all possible means, without forgetting local treatment, of which we are going to speak. And, to conclude with general treatment, we will simply mention cases of benign syphilis, sometimes so benign that a treatment which is too prolonged would fatigue the patient more than the disease itself.<sup>2</sup> These consoling cases are far from being rare.

#### LOCAL TREATMENT.

*First Period.*—We have already said that the indurated chancre cures spontaneously, and that it is sufficient to powder it with some inert substance. After pouring a little lukewarm water upon this small lesion, morning and evening, it is simply to be covered with calomel powder. In some cases, such as mixed chancres, for instance, other means will have to be resorted to. Those who are desirous of knowing all the details

<sup>1</sup> We give the method which is most generally followed. Although mercury is really less efficacious at this period than at the beginning of syphilis, we are of the opinion that the patient would do wrong to abandon it entirely as soon as the third period begins.

<sup>2</sup> The opposite extreme should not be adopted by discarding all treatment.



in regard to this are referred to special treatises on the subject.

*Second Period.*—The lesions which characterize the secondary period are cutaneous eruptions and lesions of multiple forms, called *mucous patches*, which are found either upon the genitals, the anus, the mouth, or in all three regions simultaneously :—

℞ Potassii chloratis, . . . . .	3j.
Syrup. idææ, . . . . .	℥j.
Aquæ fontis, . . . . .	℥v.

M. ft. sol.

Sig. : A tablespoonful every two hours.

Mucous patches of the mouth are seen upon the lips, inside the cheeks, and especially in the throat, on the tonsils, and anterior pillars of the velum palati. They should be cauterized every two or three days with stick nitrate of silver, and, unless the lips alone be involved, gargles containing chlorate of potassium should be added. In certain cases, knowing that this salt is eliminated by the saliva, it may be additionally prescribed in solution or lozenges.

The patches or syphilides of the ano-genital region should be lightly cauterized with nitrate of silver every third day, if they are papular or not abundant; every other day, if they are papulo-hypertrophic and confluent. Patients, especially women, whose genital lesions are generally more abundant, on account of the form of these organs, will derive benefit from the *permanent* application of compresses wet with the following solution :—

℞ Hydrargyri bichloridi, . . . . .	gr. iij.
Ammon. muriat., . . . . .	gr. xv.
Aquæ destillat., . . . . .	℥xiiss.
Aquæ rosæ, . . . . .	℥iiiss.

M. ft. sol.

Sig. : For external use.



Labbaraque's solution (of hypochlorite of soda) may also be employed for the same purpose, or a solution of chloral (2 per cent. to 4 per cent.).

All these methods are more practical, and especially more clean than that of applying mercurial ointment to eroded syphilides. Nevertheless, this latter is good, since it acts locally and in a general way by absorption. However this may be, it can scarcely be employed, except in a hospital, where patients have but one object, that of being cured as rapidly as possible, and where the necessity of wearing immaculate linen is not so much felt as outside.

Baths are good adjuvants during this period. In the first place, from the point of view of cleanliness, for water carries off irritating liquids, whose corroding action alters the neighboring tissues and transforms them into a propitious soil for the propagation of syphilides; then, from a curative point of view, on account of the composition of these baths, some of which act in both a local and general way.

At the beginning, certain syphilographers prescribe sulphur-baths, which have a general tonic action, and act locally by irritating the skin. Their object is, so to say, to attract the whole anger of the virus on the part of the integument. The cutaneous manifestations are not handsome, it is true, but they are less inconvenient than those upon the mucous membranes. The former, being dry, cannot be communicated, while the latter are highly contagious. Let us haste to add that practice does not always confirm theory, and that the two most often occur simultaneously. Nevertheless, there may be some advantage, from the stand-point of the future, in forcing the virus to explode at once; but it is without doubt related to the Phœnix, for it rises but too often



from its ashes! In the same manner, advantage may be derived from steam-baths, providing that the *proper way of taking them is known*.

The first thing to do is to select a hydro-therapeutic establishment provided with steam-stoves, dry sweating-rooms, spray douches, jets, circular showers, etc., where treatment can be pursued according to medical directions. First condition: to be entirely free in one's actions and squarely send about his business the attendant who wishes to impose *his method*. You first enter the first hot room, having a temperature of about 50° C. (122° F.); there you walk around for a few minutes, and arm-movements are made to promote perspiration. This room being generally provided with gymnastic apparatus, it is well to take advantage of this. Then you go to the next room, heated to 70° or 80° C. (158° to 176° F.); you should walk up and down for five or ten minutes at most. General rule: go out as soon as the least discomfort is felt, and direct yourself to the douche apparatus. The first to take is the *cold* shower-bath, which is merely transversed; the first impression is permitted to pass off, and then the shower is permitted to fall on the body for a few seconds. Then a true state of well-being is experienced. At the end of one or two minutes the douche in a jet is taken in front, from behind, and on the sides; then the shower-bath is sought once more. From time to time the skin of the body and the forehead should be felt; as soon as there is a return to the normal temperature, the hot rooms or the vapor-bath may be sought, following the rules given above. Generally three or four trips are made from the heat to the cold water, and inversely, which requires altogether about one hour. With practice, one may pursue it for several hours, but it is not of any use. If care have



been taken to get weighed in coming and leaving, it will be surprising to see that over two pounds have been lost, being about *one quart* of sweat charged with excrementitious and noxious principles. Mercury is equally eliminated by this way. And, what may appear surprising *à priori*, the majority of patients subjected to this treatment become more vigorous and retain their average weight; some even increase in weight. As a general thing, one vapor-bath is taken a week; sometimes two, according to the directions of the attending physician.<sup>1</sup>

We will merely mention sublimate-baths, which are good, but not practicable outside of a hospital, for it is necessary to get a small package from the pharmacist and have a *wooden* (or porcelain-lined) *bath-tub*, which is rather expensive. The following is the formula of the little package, for those who may wish to use it:—

℞ Hydrargyri bichloridi,  
Ammon. muriat., . . . . . āā ℥ss.

M. Sig.: For one bath (of at least thirty gallons).

*Third Period.*—The principal lesions of the tertiary period which necessitate local treatment are exostoses, gummata, necroses, and ulcers. Upon exostoses are to be applied blue ointment, or, better still, *emplastrum de Vigo*. The same may be said of old ulcers, in which it may occasionally do good to stimulate them by topical remedies, whose description would lead us too far. The *emplastrum de Vigo* may also prove useful in gummata as long as they are not ulcerated. But, as soon as they form a sore, it will be necessary to modify the treatment, and, above all, to be conservative in cauterizing, if this be deemed necessary. These lesions being generally

<sup>1</sup> Unless there be special indications, this treatment is only applicable to robust or obese persons. [The custom in America is to take Turkish baths, which answer the same purpose; at least, in my experience.]



very painful, many patients will be relieved by the daily application, morning and evening, of an ointment containing cocaine :—

℞ Cocaini muriat., . . . . . gr. ij.  
Vaselini albi, . . . . . ʒvj.  
M. ft. ungt.

At the end of ten or twelve days, when the sore has changed its character under internal treatment, this can be alternated with an iodine ointment, which will finally be applied alone :—

℞ Potassii iodid., . . . . . ʒss.  
Aquæ destillat., . . . . . q. s.  
Adipis, . . . . . ʒj.  
M. ft. ungt.

For necroses, if they are of the bones of the nose, irrigations of Van Swieten's solution are to be made twice daily, and once or twice with a 1-to-1000 solution of permanganate of potassium, on account of the terrible smell which the patients spread. If there be perforation of the palate or ulcers of the throat, Ricord's gargle should be prescribed :—

℞ Tinct. iodini, . . . . . ʒiss.  
Kali iodidi, . . . . . gr. xv.  
Aquæ destil., . . . . . ʒvj.  
M. ft. sol.

Such are the broad lines of antisyphilitic treatment, which we have indicated in as succinct a manner as possible. It has seemed useful to us to conclude our first volume with a formulary, accompanied by some explanations. We do not pretend to offer it as a substitute for the masterly works on the subject, and, still less, to render useless the advice of the intelligent physician. We even believe that we can say that he who reads our work will only follow the counsels of his physician the



better, for he will know why and with what he is treated. In the next place, we hope to have reconciled many of the timorous with mercury, while preventing them from falling in the clutches of charlatans; those who exploit a fear which they are the first to awaken. We have said what we thought of this social fester, against which the law seems to be impotent. We cannot share in the too complacent philosophy of Maynwaringe, who consoles himself by saying: "*Populus vult decipi*, they love the imposture; they will not be informed, so let it go on."<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, we are of the opinion that the victims should be instructed by showing them things in their true light. When patients will only hearken to the counsels of men of science, the dealers in "magical" powders will have to close their shops. Then the walls of Paris<sup>2</sup> will no longer have the shame of testifying that there still exists, at the approach of the twentieth century, individuals capable of forgetting that medicine is, above all, a sacred trust, and that, if it be permitted to earn a livelihood by it, it should never be absorbed into the ranks of trades which cannot be acknowledged!

<sup>1</sup> Maynwaringe: *The History and Mystery of the Venereal Lues*. London, 1673.

<sup>2</sup> And the newspapers in general.



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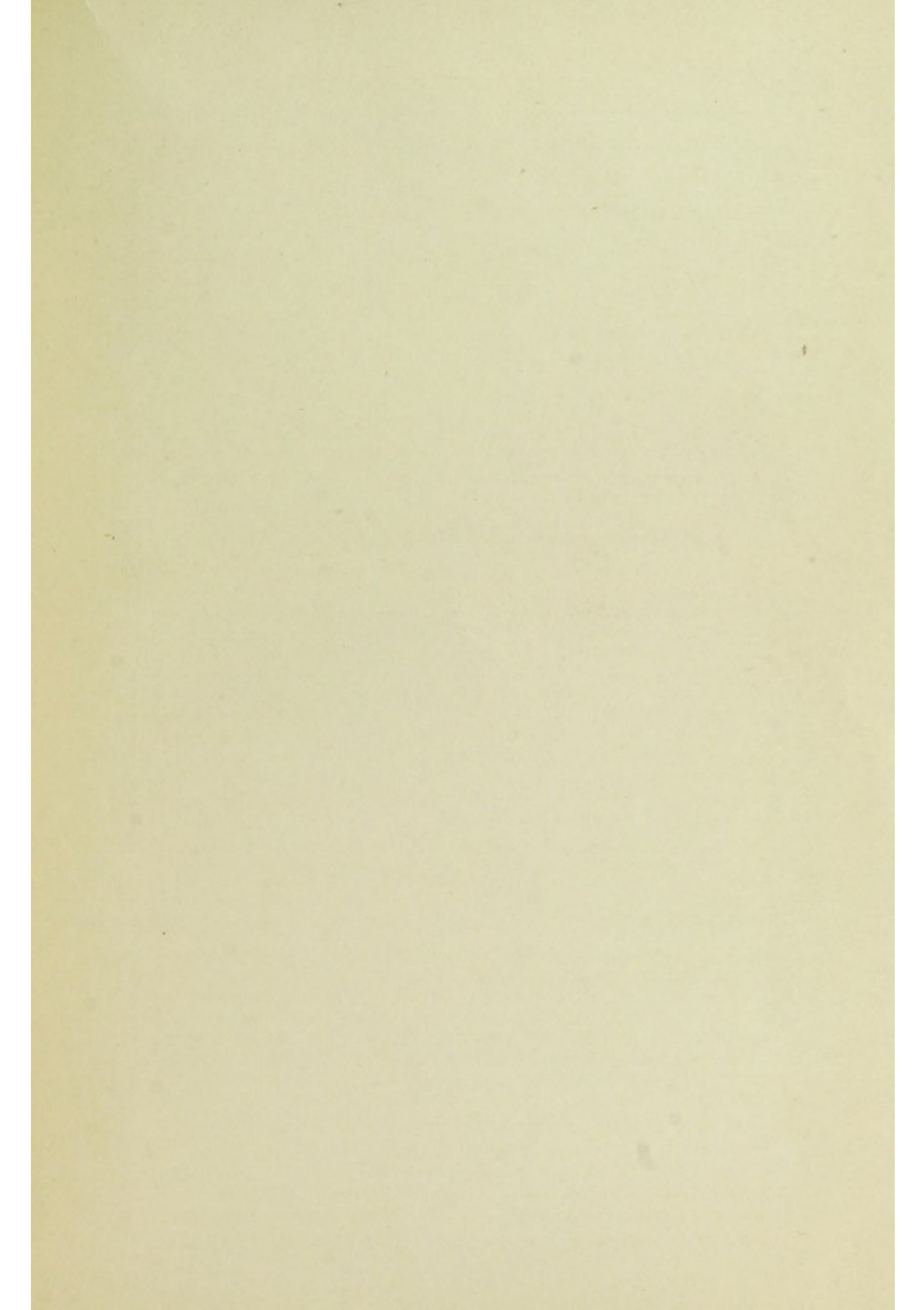
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