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*Leaf 2*

LECTURE,  
CORRELATIVE TO A COURSE,  
ON  
SURGERY,

IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

EMBRACING  
A SHORT ACCOUNT OF EMINENT BELGIAN SURGEONS,  
PHYSICIANS, &c. &c.

DELIVERED DECEMBER 22, 1847.

BY  
WILLIAM GIBSON, M.D.,  
PROFESSOR OF SURGERY.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
J. G. AUNER, No. 333 MARKET STREET.

1848

LECTURE

CORRELATIVE TO A COURSE

SURGICAL

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF EMINENT BELGIAN SURGEONS  
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BY

WILLIAM OSBORN, M.D.

PHILADELPHIA:

T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.



## LECTURE.

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GENTLEMEN,

I LEFT London on the 8th of July for Paris; and, after a delightful ride over an excellent railway, through a highly cultivated country, reached Southampton in three hours. The next day was devoted to an excursion through the *Isle of Wight*—long celebrated for its picturesque scenery, and mild, salubrious climate. The gay season was just commencing, and hundreds of beautiful barges, filled with well dressed, fashionable people, were seen skimming the smooth waters surrounding its shores, as we approached *West Cowes*, a romantic little town, perched upon the sides and eminence of a lofty hill—whence beautiful views are obtained of the island in various directions, and of its miniature seas. After spending a few hours in beholding classical spots, and marine prospects, we embarked in a small steamer, and passing *Osborne House*, Victoria's favorite summer retreat, speedily reached *Ryde*, the largest and most beautiful town in the island; thence took chaise to *Carisbrooke*, and various other celebrated places, and returned to Southampton, gratified, beyond measure, at having seen and enjoyed more in the same space, than could have been afforded, probably, by a rapid excursion through any other cultivated, or wild district in England, or, perhaps, in the world.

Upon reaching Paris, a few days after, by the *Havre* route, my intention was to sally forth at once, hunt up all my old professional friends, and then live in the *hospitals* from "morn till night." I soon discovered, however, that little, in that way, could be accomplished then, owing to extreme heat of the weather—a heat not exceeded, in intensity, by that of any American day I ever experienced, at any season of the year. My determination, therefore, was to start, as soon as possible, for Switzerland or Germany; but hearing that *Roux* expected to perform, in a day or two, a most difficult and dangerous operation on the thyroid gland, I concluded to wait, and witness the result of his undertaking. You have all heard, I am sure, more or less, of Joseph Philibert Roux, now in the sixty-eighth year of his age, who, for the



last forty years, has occupied various posts of honor; first, as surgeon of the hôpital Beaujon; next, of La Charité; lastly, of the Hôtel Dieu; in all which he distinguished himself as an operator, lecturer, and medical surgeon; and these, together with the reputation he acquired as a writer on numerous subjects, especially on immediate union after amputation, on staphyloraphy, on resection of bones, on strabismus, on wounds, and by various articles published in the "*Dictionnaire des Sciences Médicales*," independently of interesting *volumes* on surgery and physiology, on operative surgery, and of his parallel between English and French surgery, have procured for him high consideration, not only in Paris, where he is so well known and esteemed for his good character, honesty, and dignity, but in most parts of the world. And yet, strange and inconsistent as it may seem, few operators have been so notoriously unsuccessful—*why*, it is extremely difficult to say. I was curious, therefore, I confess, to witness the exploit in which he proposed to engage—however unfavorably I might augur of the result. Accordingly, accompanied by my friends, Monsieur Blacheley, of Paris, and Dr. Nowell, of South Carolina, I repaired, at the appointed hour, early in the morning, to the Hôtel Dieu, listened to a very able and fluent discourse, by Roux, upon another topic, and learned, at its termination, that the operation would be postponed until the next day, on account of the excessive heat. Desirous of knowing his reasons for operating *at all*, I conversed with him on the subject, and learned, with surprise, that—although he did not consider the woman's life endangered by suffering the tumor to remain, and the operation would, probably, prove fatal, as it had in most preceding cases—he felt *justified* in performing it, upon the ground of getting rid of disagreeable deformity, and, at the same time, of taking the *chance* of recovery. I asked if he remembered the result of the attempts at extirpation of the thyroid by Desault, Gooch, Dupuytren, and others, to which he replied by asking me the circumstances and peculiarities of each case, and particularly of an operation to which I referred, performed by an eminent American surgeon,\* a few years back. My statements and explanations appeared, however, to produce no impression upon him, at the time; and he said to me, at parting, "come down *to-morrow*, when the weather will, probably, be cooler, and you will be almost certain to see the operation." The next day found me at my post, afforded another opportunity to hear a lecture, but not to witness extirpation of the thyroid gland—the same excuse being given, that the weather was *too hot*. "Come *to-morrow*, gentlemen," said Roux to his class, "and I promise

\* The late Dr. George McClellan.



you shall not be disappointed." To-morrow came, and I, with it, to the Hôtel Dieu; but Roux made not his appearance. He had slipped off, with silent celerity, to Aix-la-Chapelle for the benefit of his *health*, and to get rid of the excessive Parisian *heat*! One of my medical friends said to me, "I am confident you have scared old Roux away by the recital of that frightful American case; and I don't regret it; for I really think the operation unnecessary; come with me, and judge for yourself." Upon repairing to the ward, I found a tall, fine-looking girl of twenty-two, robust, and, seemingly, in perfect health, with a tumor, the size of an orange, occupying the thyroid gland, free from uneasiness when handled or pressed, and not interfering, in the slightest degree, with respiration or deglutition. She asked what I thought of her case. I replied, without regard to etiquette, "Take my advice; let no surgeon come within gunshot of you, and you may, possibly, live fifty years." She seemed delighted with my prognostic, and promised to conform; and I left the old Lazar house much better pleased at the prospect of saving a life, than of seeing a splendid, but unsuccessful, exhibition of dexterity, and operative skill.

During the remainder of my stay in Paris, I saw daily, and almost hourly, young *Blacheley*, whose name I have already mentioned, and found him remarkably intelligent, well read, and enterprising in all that related to his favorite pursuits—Anatomy and Surgery. He is about twenty-six years old, the son-in-law of *Ratier*—an eminent physician of Paris, well known in America by his valuable writings—was the favorite pupil and assistant of *Lisfranc*, who bequeathed to him his choice instruments and books. He has succeeded, also, in obtaining a share of *Lisfranc*'s practice; and has already distinguished himself by some brilliant operations of the higher order. Being passionately fond of his profession, lively and playful in his temperament, courteous and engaging in his manners, he has the peculiar faculty of winning the affection and respect of his pupils, who look upon him more in the light of a brother, than a preceptor and stranger; and learn, willingly, from him many important precepts, they would hardly listen to from men of higher reputation and more formal pretensions—but destitute of his amiable and attractive qualities. It may easily be imagined, indeed, how inestimable such a friend must prove to any young stranger, arriving for the first time in a thronged city like Paris, who knows, perhaps, little more of the language than the words "*manger* and *changer*;" who feels as if he were shut out from the world, floating, as an atom or speck, upon the surface of existence. To be taken by the hand, under these circumstances; to be carried, perhaps, into the family of such a friend, and there domesticated; or have respectable



lodgings procured for him; to be conducted through each hospital and medical school; to be told and shown where he can procure the best books and instruments and apparatus, necessary for his studies, and with the least delay, are favors, which, in the incipency of his pilgrimage especially, cannot fail to be appreciated, as they deserve, by any grateful heart and thinking head. Such a friend, I am confident, young Blacheley will prove to any American student, properly introduced, not only because he seems to have a peculiar predilection for our countrymen, but is prompted, from the natural benevolence of his disposition, and unbounded love for his profession, to assist its votaries to the fullest extent. His pupils now in Paris, all of whom are graduates of this school, will respond, I am sure, to all I have said in favor of their present teacher and friend.

The weather, in Paris, still continuing oppressively warm, I determined to leave for *Brussels*; and, after a very pleasant ride over a substantial railway, in cars not exceeded for comfort and convenience by any in Europe, reached that capital in twelve hours. Delightful Brussels, Paris, as it is called, in miniature, with its wide-spread, shady avenues, its extended boulevards, edged with lofty umbrageous elms, its noble parks and palaces, splendid edifices, public and private, its picturesque site, equally divided between hill and dale, overlooking, for leagues, verdant meadows and fields, the most fertile, and best cultivated in Europe, who can fail to exclaim, at first glimpse, nature and art have combined to render thee a little paradise? These were my first impressions—fully confirmed by closer observation. How one is struck, too, with the fine forms, and noble bearing, and often gigantic proportions of its inhabitants, especially of the higher orders, with their simple and cultivated taste, in all that pertains to personal comfort, dress, and domestic arrangement. I could almost fancy, too, that even the very animals—cows, horses, dogs, goats, sheep—imitated the looks and movements of their masters. Certainly there are a close affinity and fondness between them; for they appear in every situation, in every picture, and are petted, caressed, and valued beyond measure. With feelings, and tastes, and propensities, so predominant among all classes at Brussels, and even throughout Belgium, how could the fine arts, from the earliest epochs, fail to flourish, and bring forth Rubens, Vandyck, Teniers, Champagne, De Crayer, Jordeans, Snyders, Maes, Vandermeulen, Breughel, Segers, Neefs, De Roi, the Chevalier Breydil, Kœberger, Van Coxie, and others? Look, also, to Belgian artists of modern times, and of the present day, and recount the names of Omme-ganck, Odevaere, Verbœckhoven, Galliat, and Robbe. Full of these associations and reflections, I gazed at striking objects as the coach



passed slowly along from street to street, surmounted the steep ascents, and roused me, at last, from agreeable reverie by halting at a hotel of very elevated character, so far as site and prospect were concerned, and equally *imposing* in every other respect—the Hotel de L'Europe. From a crow's nest, in the fifth story, I obtained a magnificent view of the town, and its environs, and had little difficulty, after this panoramic display, of finding the residence of our representative at the Belgian court—*Thomas G. Clemson, Esq.*—highly esteemed, at home, as a gentleman of talent, and scientific acquirements, equally appreciated abroad for the same qualities, and for the valuable services he renders our government, and the kindness and hospitality he extends to all Americans, fortunate enough to form his acquaintance. Upon calling at his mansion, pleasantly situated, near the boulevards, on the outside of the barriers, I had the pleasure to find himself and accomplished lady\* at home, but on the eve of a visit, for a few hours, to Antwerp, twenty miles off. Learning my desire, however, to form the acquaintance of the prominent surgeons and physicians of Brussels, and to examine its medical institutions, he kindly gave me a letter of introduction to Dr. William Hancock Parkinson, a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of Dublin, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, physician to Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British ambassador—to whom he was recommended by his former physician, Dr. Charles Lever, author of *Harry Lorrequer*—and established, for the last six years, as a general practitioner in Brussels. With this gentleman I soon became intimate, and found in him all that warmth of heart, intelligence and professional information for which his countrymen, all over the world, are so remarkable—rendered the more interesting and conspicuous by a refinement and frankness which seemed, intuitively, to belong to his large and very accomplished family. Upon expressing a wish to form the acquaintance of *Suetin*, the celebrated surgeon of the *Hôpital St. Pierre*, whose name and standing are very familiar to professional men of all countries—rendered so by the important share he has had in reviving the “*immovable apparatus*,” and by the invention of a most ingenious modification of it, the “*Bandage Amidonné*”—Dr. Parkinson was obliging enough to walk with me to his house. Owing, however, to his enormous practice, which keeps him, night and day, upon the trot, we did not find him at home; but, fortunately, a short time afterwards, met with him in the middle of one of the wide, fashionable streets, standing in the centre of a large group of people, with his hat off, bowing and scraping in every direction, answering their questions

\* Daughter of the Hon. J. C. Calhoun.



and salutations, alternately ; saying to one, " Oh yes, your ladyship may certainly depend upon my calling at four to-morrow ;" to another, " Dear me, I did not observe your highness until this moment ; I am just on my way to see you ;" when, interrupted by a sprightly, nymph-like damsel of eighteen, who, shouldering the crowd from right to left, reached the spot, where he stood, at a single bound, seized both his hands, and exclaimed, " Oh, Dr. Suetin, you story-telling man, I've been waiting for you these two days, and now I've caught you, and you sha'n't get away till you have listened to my case." During this scene I had fair opportunity of scrutinizing the figure and movements of this Belgian lion, and afterwards discovered that I had drawn very accurate conclusions respecting him. I saw, at a glimpse, indeed, that he was a finished gentleman, full of vivacity, and humor, and even wag-gery, when he chose to indulge in it, associated with shrewdness, tact, and sagacity, well calculated to push the fortune of any one possessed of a tithe of such qualities. His figure, eminently handsome, robust, above the medium height, displayed to the utmost advantage by the simplicity, neatness, texture and cut of his clothes ; his quick, penetrating, bluish-gray eye, full of thought and roguishness ; his expressive, undulating, aquiline nose ; his firm elastic step, well-turned leg, and tapering toes, conspicuously set off by a polished boot ; his playfully firm manner of speaking and acting, and his whole bearing and demeanor, indicated no common man. I had made up my mind, in less than two minutes, to be pleased with him ; and I continued so from first to last. After an introduction, I said to him, " I have come to Brussels expressly to see *you* and your *immovable apparatus*, and to judge, impartially, whether it deserves all the commendation and abuse which have been alternately lavished upon it. He pricked up his ears, like an old war horse at the sound of the trumpet, almost danced a horn-pipe, played off graceful airs in descanting upon the value of his hobby, said, *energetically*, " come to *St. Pierre* to-morrow morning at eight, and be convinced," sprung into his carriage, and then drove over the pavement at a fearful rate.

The next day, at the appointed hour, Parkinson and myself directed our steps to the *Hôpital St. Pierre*, and were soon joined by our friend Clemson, as an *amateur*. Half an hour elapsed, without evidence of Suetin, and his roistering car, being near. At last he came, and, out of breath, bolted through the shady grove, surrounding the venerable pile of buildings, crowded with patients of every age and sex—all too happy, when allowed to escape from its old and darksome wards, and to promenade, or rest, beneath the boughs of wide-spread beech and towering elms, where we ourselves had sought a cool and pleasant retreat



from an oppressive morning sun. As he approached the spot where we stood, he joyously cried out : "There, you see, at once, how much can be done by my bandages, starch and cartons. Look at those boys with broken thighs and legs ; see, how they are skipping about with crutches and sticks, and some of their fractures not twelve days old ! Could they do as much if encumbered by the bandages and splints of Boyer and Desault ?" We were not prepared to gainsay his statements, or dispute his facts, which seemed to stare us in the face, and say—"I dare you to deny what he has advanced." "And now," he continued, "let me go to work, and give you further proofs of the excellence of my plans ; for, although I have no perfectly recent case in the house upon which to demonstrate my methods and views, I will take, as an example, that boy's thigh, fractured eleven days ago, remove the dressings, and let you see for yourselves, whether it is shortened or, in any way deformed." Accordingly he commenced with a pair of strong spring shears, sharp at the extremity of one blade, probe-pointed at the other, to nip, or cut through the hardened case, which inclosed the limb, to the extent of a quarter of an inch at a time, continuing to cut until he had split the covering from the foot to the hip. Then, applying his fingers to the edges of the cut case, he *carefully* separated them from the limb by slow and gradual eversion : taking *especial* pains to support the thigh at the fractured part, and to disturb the whole limb as little as possible, until he effected its complete delivery from the mould, in which it had, as it were, been cast. Its appearance, as he predicted, indicating nothing unfavorable, either on the surface of the skin, or in the position of the fragments of bone, he next placed, longitudinally, some *linen* strips, or compresses, over the skin, especially about the seat of fracture ; then took a narrow roller, made of old, thick, but very soft, flexible *linen*, and applied it circularly, and with very moderate firmness, to the whole limb, with exception of the instep and toes, which were left uncovered as an index of the condition of the inclosed parts. A painter's brush, dipped in common starch, was then applied to the *edges* of the roller, and not over its entire surface, merely to connect them together externally : and, thereby, to prevent it from becoming stiff, and communicating close and disagreeable pressure to the skin beneath. Over the roller, thus applied, were laid parallel with the limb, and throughout its whole extent, several bags, or junks, about an inch and a half wide and half an inch thick, filled with tow : and between these, and also parallel with them, a piece of tape, the ends of which extended beyond the toes and hip. Another roller was made to surround the limb and junks, and starch applied to its edges, in the same cautious way. Over this second roller



were then placed thick paper-splints, cartons, or binder's boards, light, spongy, and soft, and free from glue, or any similar material calculated to stiffen them. These splints, previously softened by water, extended from the spine of the ilium to the toes, were hollowed out and moulded to the limb, so as to surround it completely, and form a base, with the exception of the instep and toes. While these were held in their respective situations by assistants, Suetin applied another roller, well starched, except that portion which covered the *ridge of the tibia*, and connected all the splints firmly together. His object in keeping the starch from touching the dressings over the tibia, was to avoid irritation, which he had, from experience, found uncomfortable to patients, and injurious. Shorter bands, or rollers, were next applied, circularly, especially over the seat of fracture, and well plastered with starch. A loop, made out of strong linen, was also connected by starch and rollers to the foot, and hung beneath its sole, for the purpose of extension, in case of shortening of the limb, by overlapping of the fragments. To fill up inequalities, and to prevent the starched edges of the rollers from giving pain, by their hardness, layers of carded cotton were carefully placed in various situations, previous to the application of the splints. The whole process was completed by placing a piece of oiled silk, seven or eight inches square, on the inner and upper part of the thigh, to prevent the dressings from being soaked by urine, and the excoriation consequent thereto. In several other cases similar dressings were applied by Suetin—only modified by peculiarities of each case, and the individual bones broken, and in all with the same favorable result—without pain or complaint on the part of the patients, and with every prospect of perfect cure, whilst walking about with the assistance of a stick, or crutch. Under progress of treatment were shown to us, upon the same occasion, ten or twelve cases of fractured thighs, legs, arms, clavicles, all in a fair way towards consolidation of fragments and cure, without confinement to bed, or to the hospital, except at night. In the clavicle cases, the apparatus of Desault was applied, and the outer bandages, being well brushed and saturated with starch, seemed to hold their places so firmly as not to require, probably, a removal until a cure should be effected. After showing us all the wards of this large and ancient hospital, prescribing for its numerous syphilitic patients, male and female, and for various cases of medical surgery, Suetin's attention was called to one of those obscure and complicated fractures of the radius, just above the wrist, which the most eminent surgeons have found so difficult to detect and treat. The injury had been sustained a few hours before; and swelling having supervened, it became extremely difficult for any one to pronounce



decisively, respecting the exact nature of the injury. Fatigued as he was, however, and almost worn out by the exertions he had made for several hours, in demonstrating, for our benefit, the principles which governed him, and the practice he employed in the treatment, not only of fractures, but of various other diseases, such as abscesses, ulcerations, carious joints, coxalgia, varicose veins, by the "*Bandage Amidonné*," he repaired, at once, to the assistance of the patient, examined his wrist, pronounced the injury to be a fracture of the radius, half an inch above its lower extremity, applied his dressings in such a way as to preserve the *interosseous space*, controlled the hand by a broad splint, extending beyond the fingers, fastened all together by his starched rollers, placed the forearm in a flexed position, sustained it by a sling, and promised the patient a perfect cure in two or three weeks. "How long," said I, "will you keep that apparatus applied?" "Only for two or three days," was the reply. "If," he continued, "it were suffered to remain too long, and without passive motion of the wrist, ankylosis or stiffness of tendons, might ensue." This convinced me he knew what he was about, and I left the hospital much edified by all I had seen; and convinced that the immovable apparatus, if managed with the skill and caution of a *Suetin*, is decidedly superior, in the generality of cases, to most other dressings; and equally well calculated to inflict a vast amount of injury, if employed by those ignorant of its mechanism and power.

We were all much amused, before leaving St. Pierre, at Suetin's demonstrations of another kind. He exclaimed, after getting through his six hours' work, "Dear me, I never was so hungry in all my life! here, garçon, get me a beef stake, and a bottle of Chablis." Both were furnished without delay, and he made a regular set to at the commodities, and with less ceremony and care than he had displayed towards the fractures. And yet, this practice of going "hospital rounds" before breakfast, is almost universal in France, and on the continent, and ought to be followed, I should imagine, by many an inconvenience and dyspeptic attack. However, most of the Belgian and Parisian, and German and Dutch surgeons and physicians I saw, were proofs to the contrary; many of them being as bright and rosy and chubby as boys; and Suetin, in particular, although now fifty-five, might readily pass for forty: and looks as if he had never had an ache or pain in his life, notwithstanding all he has endured, professionally, from civil and military practice, and the contests and squabbles he has had about the "*Bandage Amidonné*," with French and Flemish and German rivals, who have kept him, perpetually, in hot water, and upon the defensive, by obliging him to publish pamphlets, such as—"Mémoire sur le Traite-



ment des *Fractures en général, par le Bandage Amidonné* ;” “ *Observations de Fractures Compliquées* ;” “ *Lettre à M. le Redacteur du Bulletin Médicale Belge ; une reponse à un article de M. Velpeau, intitulé Explications sur L. Appareil inamovible, &c.* ;” “ *Revue générale des principaux cas de Chirurgie* ;” “ *A Monsieur le Redacteur de la Lancette Français* ;” “ *Coup d’Œil Chirurgical, sur les principaux cas qui se sont présentés à la Clinique du Professeur Suetin, pendant le semestre de 1846* ;” “ *Fracture Compliquée de la jambe droite, reponse à M. Le Professeur Blandin* ;” “ *Lettre Addressée à L’Academie Royale de Médecine de Belgique, à-propos de la Discussion sur la Méthode Amovo, inamovible* ;” — independently of an octavo volume on the Starch Bandage, including many details not met with in the controversial memoirs. It would be out of place, in an address like this, to extend the consideration of the merits or demerits of the “*Bandage Amidonné*,” further ; but I cannot avoid remarking, in defence and justification of Dr. Suetin, that he never pretended to claim for himself the original invention of an immovable apparatus ; which, he confessed from the first, to have been used in ancient times, under various forms and modifications, by the Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Arabians, Moors, Spaniards, Corsicans, Indians, Brazilians, and, at later periods, by Belloste, Moscati, Ledran, and Cheselden ; and still more recently, by the celebrated Larrey, during his military campaigns ;—that all he contended for, was the substitution of starch in place of the less appropriate materials previously used, the superiority of his particular dressings, and mode of applying them, and the injustice done him by Velpeau, Blandin, Malgaigne, and others, in misrepresenting the results of his practice, exaggerating the defects of his apparatus, as exhibited by him in most of the Parisian hospitals, during his interesting sojourn in that city for several weeks in the year 1839. That he is borne out by the facts, stated in all his defensive memoirs, and by those furnished by his friend and pupil Pigeolet, in his interesting historical sketch of the “*Bandage Amidonné* ;” that his apparatus is very superior to the imitation of it by Velpeau—who employs the hard and unyielding article “*dextrine*,” instead of starch, and the bandage of Scultetus, instead of the roller—I am prepared to believe, from having repeatedly witnessed the effect of each, as applied by the hands of Velpeau himself in La Charité, and by those of Suetin in St. Pierre.

During my stay in Brussels of eight or ten days, and during another visit subsequently made to it, I saw much of Suetin in his professional character, and in his social circle. Scarcely a day passed without witnessing, at his hospital, some of his practice and exploits ; and in



turn, he was curious to learn American modes of treatment, and our system of operative surgery. Upon one occasion, he said, whilst dining with our friend Clemson, "I have just received intelligence of the admission into my hospital of an old woman laboring under strangulated hernia. Will you do me the favor to undertake her case, and show me the American mode of performing the operation, if one should prove necessary for her relief." I consented so to do, and, accompanied by Suetin, Clemson and Parkinson, reached the hospital about the commencement of twilight. As soon, however, as I saw the patient's distressed and haggard countenance, and touched her tight, tender and distended abdomen, always most unfavorable omens in cases of the kind, I said to *Suetin*, "In my opinion an operation here will be of no avail; the bowel has been too long strictured, and peritoneal inflammation has already taken place; nevertheless, if you say so, I will operate, inasmuch as it will add very little to her suffering, and may *possibly* be followed by success."\* Preliminaries being settled, I commenced the operation, with light barely sufficient to enable me to see what I was about, divided the skin, superficial fascia, fascia propria, by separating their successive layers, reached the sac, opened it by pinching up a fold and passing the knife *horizontally*, then dilated it by the probe-pointed bistoury, arrived at the intestine and omentum, both of which were discolored and engorged, insinuated my forefinger as high as the stricture, passed the bistoury beneath it, divided it, returned the intestine and omentum, closed the wound by two or three tacks of the interrupted suture, passed through the *integuments*, and supported all by the "*bandage amidonné*." Suetin expressed his surprise that I should have used the knife so freely, wondered that I had not cut the intestine, said the practice in Belgium was to employ the scissors, and to take up a great deal of time in making the incisions, &c. As predicted, no benefit followed, and the patient died about the fourth day—from peri-

\* The history of the case obligingly furnished by Dr. Suetin: "La nommée Demol, marié, âgée de 58 ans, se présente à l'hôpital St. Pierre le 23 Juillet, atteinte de hernie crurale. La malade opérée par Monsieur Gibson, présente comme symptômes généraux, le suivants. Tumeur rénitente, douloureuse à la pression. Circonvolutions intestinales se dessinant à travers les parois abdominales. Ventre météorisé et douloureux. Absence de selles depuis le 18. Courant vomissements présentant l'odeur de matières stercorales; ces vomissements remontent au 21. La hernie débute par une tumeur, dont le volume égalait celui d'un pois; il y-a de cela 15 jours. Au bout de huit jours, c'est-à-dire, à dater du 18 Juillet, cette tumeur augmente, et c'est alors seulement que les symptômes énoncés plus haut se déclarent. La face, à son entrée, accuse l'anxiété, est grippée. Le pouls endessous de la normale. Au moment de faire l'opération, la malade rend par le haut des matières stercorales liquides."



toneal inflammation—showing, as in all similar cases, *delay* to be the chief cause of danger, and not the *knife*; which, when early employed, is almost uniformly successful.

I will close my account of *Suetin* by observing, that he stands, by common consent, at the head of the profession in Belgium, has had a very large share of experience, part of which was earned on the great battle-field of Waterloo—near which he was born—and subsequently, at the siege of Antwerp; that he is naturally a man of great ability, of great activity of mind and body, very enthusiastic in all he undertakes, remarkable for his personal attractions and manners, and *bonhomie* and pleasantries; and admirably calculated, from these and his well known substantial, professional merits, to make a very strong impression upon minds of the highest order and attainment. This has lately been evinced by the honor conferred upon him by the king, who, as I learn through a valued correspondent at Brussels, has just enrolled him in the list of aristocratic worthies, by creating him a Baron of the empire,—in addition to his former titles of Chevalier of the order of the Belgic Lion, and of the Legion of Honor of Leopold the First.

Among other eminent professional men with whom I became acquainted at Brussels, I may mention *André Uytterhoeven*, surgeon in chief to the new and splendid "*Hôpital St. Jean*." He is a small, thin man, very gentle and kind in demeanor, slow in speech and gait, has a grave, thoughtful, but pleasant countenance, and is evidently full of judgment and information. In personal appearance and character, he reminded me strongly of our own estimable and excellent physician and surgeon Dr. Ashmead. I met him for the first time at "*St. Jean*," and he very obligingly conducted me through the whole establishment, pointing out all the recent improvements in ventilation, the peculiar modes of conducting heat by flues through all the vast entries, galleries, wards, various out-houses and spacious baths, of this magnificent and recently finished hospital. In going through one of the lofty wards, he called my attention to a striking and most interesting case—that of a stout, healthy-looking woman of thirty-five, in whom the constitutional tendency to hemorrhage was so great, that the blood issued constantly from the fingers and toes, and almost every pore of the body, especially during the regular period of catamenial flow. What rendered the case more remarkable, was an accompanying disease of the heart, and the strongest possible apoplectic disposition—only subdued, perhaps, by the perpetual hemorrhagic oozing and discharge. Another extraordinary case was also shown, in which a man, originally afflicted with *mollities ossium*, had the disease converted, after lapse of years, into *fragilitas*, to such extent as to involve almost the entire skeleton, and require the



immovable apparatus to be kept constantly upon the thighs, and some other bones, to prevent them from giving way from the slightest movements, whilst in bed. After full examination of all the medical and surgical wards, inferior, perhaps, for spaciousness, convenience and cleanliness, to none in any part of the world, Dr. Uytterhoeven conducted me to the ophthalmic department, under the control of *Fleurent Cunier*, a gentleman well known in Europe, through his "*Revue ophthalmologique*," his "*Annales d'Oculistique*," and his "*Recherches sur l'emploi de quelques combinaisons du Cyanogène dans le traitement des maladies des yeux*." It so happened that *Cunier* was then going his rounds, and prescribing for his patients, most of them afflicted with scrofulous ophthalmia and granular disease of the lids, in the treatment of which he generally employed the argenti nitratum in its solid form, and with the most beneficial result. I found him extremely civil and obliging, very enthusiastic in his vocation, laudably inquisitive respecting American ophthalmic surgery and its treatment; and drew the conclusion from all I saw, that he was full of talent and energy, very confident in the correctness of his own views and practice, in all that relates to the eye, though not disagreeably and ostentatiously so; and bent ambitiously upon reaching, as an oculist, the summit of renown. He is a tall, thin, courteous man, apparently about thirty-five, with large, expressive eyes, and agreeable features, very springy and active in all his movements, as quick in his apprehension as in the use of his fingers and instruments, and looks, from his lithe and flexible figure and animated face, as if he would be sure to take the lead in a grayhound chase, and come out first, no matter how fast his competitors might go.

There is, in the "*Hôpital St. Jean*," a large and choice collection of surgical instruments, an excellent library, and some fine pathological preparations and specimens. Among the latter, I was shown by *Dr. Uytterhoeven*, an enormous calculus, measuring, in its longitudinal circumference, twelve inches, and in its greatest transverse diameter, eleven; taken by him, unsuccessfully, through the high operation, from a man of thirty-nine, who had labored under the disease from infancy. It was the largest urinary calculus I had ever seen, except the one in the Hunterian Museum in London, removed by Sir James Earle, from the bladder of Sir Walter Ogilby, after death, and was found to weigh *forty-four* ounces.

Before taking leave of Drs. *Uytterhoeven* and *Cunier*, I was carried by them to the upper wards of the "*Hôpital St. Jean*," and shown one of the finest and most extended prospects I ever beheld, reaching as far as the eye could see, over prairie-like meadows and luxuriant



grain-fields, dotted, in every direction, with white and shining villages, and with chateaus and castles of the nobility, inexpressibly beautiful and picturesque. Among these, seen to the utmost advantage, is "*Læken*," the summer residence of the king, better known in bygone days as the rural retreat of the excellent, but unfortunate, Josephine; who there sojourned, for convenient correspondence, with her then affectionate master and lord, whilst he reveled in carnage and death on many a distant battle-field. Better, by far, had he never known, in after times, a loftier palace and another Queen!\*

Can I cease to speak of fascinating, salubrious *Brussels*, without saying to every medical student, likely to visit France, go, after a winter's hard work in the metropolis of the medical world—leave the inquinated atmospheres of old *Hôtel Dieu*, *La Charité*, *La Pitié*, *St. Louis*—turn your backs upon typhus fever and cholera, crowded streets, noisome smells, tropical heats—jump into luxurious cars, and be wafted, in a single night, to green fields, wide streets, open squares, delicious groves, umbrageous parks—go to *Brussels*, seek out the *Baron Suetin*; tell him you wish to spend six months under his care in the "*Hôpital St. Pierre*"—go to *Uytterhoeven*, to *Cunier*, to *Parkinson*; tell them all I sent you there, to learn what you cannot learn elsewhere to the same advantage, the treatment of fractures; to preserve your health and strength, to enable you to return to the "*pays latins*" and "*Ecole de Médecine*," the succeeding autumn, freshened in vigor of mind and body, and prepared to sustain another well-fought winter's campaign? Fail not to remember, too, whilst sojourning in the Belgian capital, to revel in the luxuries of taste and design; spend your leisure hours at the *Royal Museum* of painting and sculpture; there examine the pictures of *Christ armed with thunder to destroy the world*; the *Martyrdom of St. Lieven*; the *Adoration of the Magi*; *Christ falling under the weight of the Cross*; the *Coronation of the Virgin*; a *Dead Christ at the Sepulchre*, all by *Rubens*; dwell upon a candle-light by *Gerard Dow*; upon another by *Schalcken*; scrutinize a splendid picture by *Snyders*, representing a swan and other birds, and fruits; also a capital

\* With Dr. Carswell, formerly Professor in the London University, and celebrated for his pathological writings, I did not meet during my sojourn in Brussels, in which city he now resides, and holds the high and responsible office of Physician to the King and his household. He was absent, having accompanied the king, whose health is delicate, to Paris, for the purpose of consulting some of the eminent physicians of that capital on his case. I regretted very much not meeting with him, as I had formed his acquaintance some years before in London, and found him in every respect a most interesting man. From his Belgian friends I learned that he was enjoying the *otium cum dignitate*, so justly his due, after the labor he had gone through for so many preceding years in his native land.



head by *Rembrandt*:—then turn to the productions of the *living* artists of *Brussels*; and first to those of *Louis Robbe*, a lawyer by profession, an accomplished gentleman, a worthy and honest man, and a painter of rare merit; then to the splendid pictures of *Verboeckhoven*, also a living artist of *Brussels*, famous for the number and excellence of his pictures; then visit, at her studio, *Madame Oconnel*, a lively, black-eyed brunette, full of talent, famous for her portraits; go next to the residence of *Gallait*, an historical painter of great celebrity; ask to see the picture of a *Monk*, with right arm folded over left shoulder, and the left laid upon the Bible, the head and hands magnificently painted in the style of *Murillo* or *Velasques*, absolutely standing out from the canvas, and looking more like the head and eyes of the “*banished lord*,” by *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, than any other picture I ever beheld, and not unlike, in expression, the fine features of the late *Dr. Godman*; ask, also, permission to examine his fine picture representing the *temptation of St. Anthony*; go afterwards to the *Palais de Justice*, and see another large and magnificent picture by *Gallait*, representing the abdication of Charles the Fifth; walk to the large and tasteful mansion of *Eugene Verboeckhoven*, and you will there see the most finished specimens of horses, dogs, sheep, goats, cows, lions, tigers, standing out from the canvas in perfect relief; at your leisure go to the palace of the *Duke d’Arenberg*, and repeat the visit again and again, and there behold some of the finest pictures of *Rubens*, *Vandyke*, *Rysdale*, *Teniers*, *Paul Potter*, *Bothe*, *Wouvermans*, *Gerard Dow*, *Ostade*, *Jan Steen*, *Brauer*, *Kuyp*, and hundreds of others, all in the most perfect preservation; lastly, go to the private residence of an amateur and respectable citizen, *Mr. Vanderbergen*, and study his fine collection of *modern* pictures, many of which are of exquisite touch and finish, and quite equal to the best of the old masters. Those most worthy of notice, are two pictures by *Van Eycken*, the one representing a mother and child sleeping, the other a mother and child just starting out of sleep; a beautiful picture representing sheep by *Omeganck*, of *Antwerp*; another by *Bellanger*, of *Paris*, a scene after a battle; a monkey scene by *Decamps*, of *Paris*; the interior of a kitchen, by *Dyckmans*; a lion hunt, by *Horace Vernet*; a sea piece, by *Gudin*; a herd of cattle, by *Robbe*, of *Brussels*; a miniature, exquisitely painted, of a dog, cat, woman, and brass kettle, by *Brias*, of *Brussels*; another, by the same artist, representing market women; a very fine picture by *Lucks*, called the bad husband, in which a man is represented in the act of leaving his wife and children, but is arrested in his flight by the entreaties of an elderly female—the countenance of the man and the distress of his wife being inimitable; a very fine representation of the



exterior of a church, by *Sabron*, of Paris; a storm at sea, by *Scholtal*, of Holland, uncommonly fine; a landscape, by *Koeckoeck*, of Holland, also very fine; a droll scene, by *Noel*, of *Brussels*; an admirable representation of a dead hare, and bird, by *Mrs. Hallemans*, of Brussels, the landscape by her husband; a very fine landscape, by *De Jonghe*, of Belgium; a capital flower piece, by *Jacoblear*, of Paris, equal to most of *De Heem's*; sheep and goats by *Verboeckhoven*, of *Brussels*; an inimitable picture by *Winterhalten*, of Germany, painter to Queen Victoria, representing a mother and child; a castle, river, and boats, by *Vervaer*, of Holland, estimated at an enormous price; a landscape, by *Schelfhont*, of Holland, the animals by *Verboeckhoven*—cost a very large sum; another capital picture by *Brias*; a beautiful Swiss landscape by *Calame*; and many others equally well painted and valuable.

During the whole of my stay in Brussels, including two visits made at different periods, I had the opportunity of attending an exhibition, which would have reflected high honor upon the taste, skill, and mechanical ingenuity of any nation upon the globe. I allude to an "*Exposition*" of the products of Belgian industry, upon the principle of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia, and of other similar establishments in the United States, but upon a scale and plan infinitely more extended and diversified. It would be impossible for me, in the small space of a single lecture, to enumerate the thousandth part of all the articles, and fabrics, and inventions, and contrivances, I there saw, displayed to the utmost advantage in an immense building two or three hundred yards long, and proportionably high—erected for the purpose. Suffice it, therefore, to say, that each province of Eastern and Western Flanders, of *Antwerp*, of *Brabant*, of *Hainaut*, of *Luxembourg*, of *Limbourg*, of *Liège*, of *Namur*;—that each town, and city, and village, and hamlet, including *Brussels*, and *Ghent*, and *Antwerp*, and *Louvain*, and *Bruges*, and *Malines*, and *Tournay*, and *Lierre*, and *Tirlemont*, and *Nieuport*, and *Tongres*, and *Alost*, and *Furnes*, and *Dixmud*, and *Termonde*, and *St. Trond*, and *Audenarde*, and *Ipres*, and *Charleroy*, and *Jemmappes*, and *Courtray*, and *Verviers*, and *St. Nicholas*, and *Nivelles*, and *Laeken*, and *Vilvorde*, and *Braine le Comte*, and *Enghien*, and a hundred more, all contributed their quota to make up the most magnificent display I ever beheld, of silks, velvets, satins, laces, cloths, cassimeres, flannels, linens, carpets, locomotives, steam-engines, cutlery, surgical instruments, guns, pistols, swords, furniture, carriages, chemical preparations, glass ware, anatomical preparations, and of thousands of other articles it would be impossible for me to particularize—all showing the wonderful sagacity, and industry, and wealth, and prosperity, and indomitable energy of the Belgians, for



which they have been celebrated from the earliest periods of their history. I make these remarks without excepting the similar gorgeous displays I have witnessed in some other places, even upon a more extensive scale.

Any student who may feel disposed to follow my counsel, and spend the summer months at Brussels, will naturally desire, for the sake of relaxation, and the information he will acquire, to pay occasional visits to the adjoining towns and villages; all which can be done, at little cost and trouble, through the numerous railways extended in every direction throughout the country. He will visit *Liège*, on account of its former and present pre-eminence in manufactures, and the hilly and romantic character of its scenery, compared with the dull and prairie-like aspect of the greater part of Belgium; *Louvain*, from its splendid hôtel de ville, and the history and associations connected with its ancient and celebrated university, which once contained 6000 students; *Ghent*, from its history, also, and the interesting circumstances attending the treaty formed there, a few years since, by our statesmen, some of whom still live, and have strong hold, from their high character and eminent services, upon the gratitude and affections of the American people; *Antwerp*, from its wealth and commercial importance, its peculiar appearance, strong position and fortifications, its sieges, but, immeasurably beyond these, from having been, it may be said, the birthplace of *Rubens*, whose unequaled productions still adorn the cathedrals and churches, and other public buildings, for which they were painted. The first and most glorious of these, though now changed by the corroding hand of time, by ignorant picture dealers, by its journey to Paris and return thence, still occupies its original position in the great cathedral of *Notre Dame*; hangs in the southern transept near the door opening upon the Place Verte, has long been considered the *chef-d'œuvre* of *Rubens*, and well known under the appellation, "*the Descent from the Cross*." Brilliant, however, as this picture must have been in its coloring when first painted, and inimitable in some parts of the drawing, it is not comparable, in my opinion, to the *Crucifixion*, now contained in the museum of *Antwerp*. Nothing, indeed, it seems to me, can exceed this truly magnificent picture, which is of immense size, and contains full-length figures of *Christ*, the *Two Thieves*, the *Virgin Mary*, *Mary Magdalen*, *Mary* the wife of *Cleophas*, an executioner piercing the side of the *Saviour*, another breaking the legs of one of the thieves, and the *Good Centurion*, on horseback, all grouped in the most wonderful manner, and calculated, by their countenances and attitudes—so expressive of the emotions peculiar to each—by freshness of coloring, and transparency, and exquisite



finish, to astonish every beholder. Indeed, I could hardly tear myself away from it, and felt for weeks afterwards as if it were the only picture I had ever seen entirely destitute of blemish or defect. Another picture, by the same artist, and of equal dimensions, hangs opposite to the *Crucifixion*, the *Adoration of the Magi*—and, if placed in any other situation, or seen first, could not fail to make a very strong impression; for it is, in reality, a picture of very great merit, but is so overshadowed by its propinquity to its companion, as to appear comparatively almost valueless. Other pictures, in this large collection, are very fine, such as the *Interment of Christ*, by *Quéntin Metsys* the blacksmith of *Antwerp*; the *Saviour Dead*, in the arms of his father; a diminished picture of the *Descent from the Cross*; *Christ* showing his wounds to *St. Thomas*; the *Virgin* with the *infant Jesus*; portraits of burgomasters of *Antwerp*—all by *Rubens*; the *Supper*, by *Jordaens*; portrait of *Cæsar Alexander Scaglia*, by *Vandyck*; a large garland of flowers, by *Segers* and *Schutz*; *Swan*, by *Snyders*; flowers, by *Van Thielen*; a fine *Teniers*, and some large modern pictures representing the siege of *Antwerp* by the Spaniards. Some of the private collections of *Antwerp* are also choice, and well deserving of a visit; but are not always accessible to strangers. In a medical point of view, there is little in *Antwerp* to interest a student. The hospital is large, and full of patients, though not remarkable, it is said, for cleanliness or discipline.

Few persons, I presume, whatever may be their profession, or pursuit, will be inclined to leave *Brussels*, without visiting the great field of *Waterloo*—distant only ten miles from that capital. How very few, however, of all the pilgrims to that much frequented shrine, will be able or willing to profit by the lessons they will there learn of the instability of human greatness and power, of the vanity and worthlessness of pride and pomp and show, of the wretchedness and woe entailed upon thousands of widows and orphans by the result of that “*great and glorious battle*,” as it is called, and of the wickedness resulting from the violation of those heavenly precepts, “*peace on earth, and good will towards men*.” But the *thinking* few, at least, will be ready to exclaim, after such a tour—

“On what foundation stands the warrior’s pride,  
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide;  
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,  
No dangers fright him, and no labors tire;  
O’er love, o’er fear, extends his wide domain,  
Unconquered lord of pleasure and of pain;



No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,  
 War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;  
 'Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,  
 And one capitulate, and one resign;  
 Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain,  
 'Think nothing gained,' he cries, 'till nought remain;  
 On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,  
 And all be mine beneath the polar sky.'  
 The march begins in military state,  
 And nations on his eye suspended wait;  
 Stern famine guards the solitary coast,  
 And winter barricades the realms of frost;  
 He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay;  
 Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day:  
 The vanquished hero leaves his broken bands,  
 And shows his miseries in distant lands;  
 Condemned a needy suppliant to wait,  
 While ladies interpose, and slaves debate;  
 But did not chance, at length, her error mend?  
 Did no subverted empire mark his end?  
 Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?  
 Or hostile millions press him to the ground?  
 His fall was destined to a barren strand,  
 A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;  
 He left a name, at which the world grew pale,  
 To point a moral or adorn a tale."

Such were the thoughts and reflections which pressed upon me as I rode, with my friend *Parkinson*, o'er hill and dale, through dusky groves of straight and towering beech which almost lined the way to *Waterloo*. The day and month—16th of August, 1847—were singularly well chosen for the excursion, the sun being so bright, the atmosphere so clear, as to enable us to distinguish every interesting object at an immense distance; while the fields, divested of their luxuriant crops of grass and grain, permitted us to ride and walk in peace and safety, where thousands, thirty years before, had ridden on the "whirlwind and reaped the storm." But I have no intention to inflict upon you a description of *Waterloo*; its horrors having been sufficiently portrayed by a thousand pens, more graphic and efficient by far than mine. Allow me only to say—that I stood where *Napoleon*, at first proudly, but at last *humiliatingly* stood before; where *Wellington*, through the matchless quality of Anglo-Saxon blood, and the unsurpassed power of Anglo-Saxon sinew and bone, maintained his ground from beginning to end, and almost without a waver in his line, defied the talents and combinations of the greatest military chieftain the world ever saw, and the reiterated onsets of as brave and enthusiastic troops



as ever assembled upon a battle-field ; where *Picton*, and *Ponsonby*, and *Gordon*, and *Delancey*, and the brave "*Hanoverians*" fell ; where *Ney*, with all the intrepidity and desperation belonging to his nature, made charge upon charge of the most appalling kind ; where the farm *La Haye*, steeped in carnage and in blood, taken and retaken with tremendous loss, more especially to the noble *German Legion*, which fought till every drop of blood was poured from its veins ; where *La Belle Alliance* and *Planchenoit*, so disastrous to the six thousand valiant *Prussians*, whose dead bodies cumbered their grounds ; where *Château Hougomont*, with its fortified and battered walls, defended by the "*Cold Stream Guards*," repulsed, with terrific slaughter, thousands upon thousands of the flower of the *Emperor's* troops ; and lastly, where, from the summit of the "*Lion Mound*," two hundred feet above the level and extended plain, formed, apparently by nature for such a conflict, I could see and understand, as far as limited military knowledge would admit—all that had taken place.

But other aspirations, more interesting to me by far than military skill and glory and destruction of human life, upon a gigantic scale, expended too often, there is reason to believe, upon the hideous and revolting principle, millions must die "*that Cæsar may be great*," crowded upon my mind. Then I asked myself the question, who were the *true* heroes upon that trying occasion, who the good Samaritans, able and willing to bind up wounds upon the road-side, for friends or foes, prepared to save life, not to destroy it ? The response came in soothing, refreshing whispers—*Larrey*, with his whole corps of well educated, experienced surgeons and compatriots ; *Hennen*, replete with Hunterian principles, and with practical skill, the result of many a hard fought day, surrounded by his friends and assistants, *Obeirne*, *Knox*, *Gordon*, *Browning*, *Lindsay*, *Simpson*, *Irwin*, *Blackadder*, *Laisne*, *Dakers*, *Somerville*, *Dease*, *Reid*, *Robinson*, *Gunning*, *Pockels*, *Suetin*, *Spangenberg*—sustained by the invaluable counsel of *Guthrie*, *Thomson*, *Bell*. These, I repeat, *were the heroes* of the day, will be so considered in after times, by every enlightened and Christian people, will receive, like *Ambrose Paré* of old, rewards and honors greater than emperors and kings can bestow—those of an approving conscience and of the King of kings—and will be entitled to feel and to say—

"Regum timendorum in proprios greges,  
Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis."

That the great battle of Waterloo, however, in conjunction with many preceding ones in Russia, Germany, Holland, and Spain, has been productive of immeasurable good, by enlarging our knowledge of gun-shot



wounds and corresponding injuries, there cannot be the smallest doubt ; for, previous to these periods, the notions of surgeons were loose and vacillating in the extreme, and their principles so indecisive and unsettled, and so mixed up with disputations and theories, as to lead to the most injudicious and unsuccessful modes of treatment ; whereas now, under the clear and steady light which pathological anatomy and *medical* science have shed conjointly upon military and naval surgery, intertwining the two indissolubly, each has been rendered more exact and luminous ; so much so, that any *mere* surgeon or physician, who should now undertake to treat a gun-shot wound of the head, neck, chest, abdomen, or limbs, without that combination, and without having derived his knowledge from the battle-field, or frigate's deck, or some other available source, would be unmindful of his patient's safety, and of the public weal.

The only *relic* I thought it worth while to remove from *Waterloo*, was a French cranium—at least, so I judged from its conformation—dug up two weeks before from the Prussian ground ; well calculated to prove the important principle in projectiles, that a bullet passing from a rare medium into a dense one, makes a round and comparatively smooth opening ; but having passed through the dense medium into a rare one, produces, necessarily, a much larger opening. Thus, in the cranium alluded to, the ball entered the left parietal bone, near its junction with the occipital, making an opening very little larger than itself on the *outer* table of the bone, but the sixteenth part of an inch larger on the internal edge of the inner table, then passing through the brain and out on the opposite side, fracturing both tables extensively, and making a very large opening. Another cranium, illustrating the same effect, though not to the same extent, found at *Waterloo* twenty years ago, and presented to me soon after by my kind friend Dr. Alexander E. Hosack, of New York, is still in my possession. Upon comparing them with each other, after my return, I could not avoid expressing, mentally, to each : “ Alas, poor Yorick ! perhaps marched, unwillingly, to the fatal field, thence rudely torn from your resting-place, and made to serve in a distant hemisphere, purposes you could never have dreamed of in La Belle France, your happy native land ! ”

Few countries, in proportion to its population, could boast, in former times, of more exalted names in the various departments of our profession, than *Belgium* ; but there is one name so intimately associated with all that is remarkable in genius, in learning, in practical skill, in all that pertains to curious and romantic history and to misfortune, and it may be, to crime, as to deserve marked consideration. You have all heard, no doubt, of Andrew Vesalius, born at Brussels, some two



hundred and thirty years ago, received at Louvain a highly finished education, studied anatomy and surgery at Paris, entered the army of Charles the Fifth as a surgeon, became the physician of the same monarch, settled at his imperial court, served successively in the same capacity under Philip the Second, whose son Prince Charles, he saved the life of by a new and well-timed operation, taught anatomy with distinguished applause in the different schools of Padua, Bologna, and Pisa, published a magnificent work, entitled, "*De corporis humani fabrica*," in two large folio volumes, the plates of which were drawn by his friend and companion Titian, a work so correct and minute in all its details, and so accurate in its plates, as to procure for its author the reputation of having been the first to rescue anatomy from the shackles by which it was restricted, to establish it upon a solid foundation, and to advance the principles and practice of surgery, to an unprecedented degree. In the midst of this brilliant career, being called upon to attend a Spanish gentleman whose body, after death, he was permitted to open and inspect, and the heart being observed to beat, he was summoned before the Inquisition, and would have been condemned, but for the exertions of the king, who obtained his release upon condition that he should expiate his crime by a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Thither, accordingly, he repaired; and after a residence of some time at Jerusalem, being invited to occupy the anatomical chair at Padua, and accepting the proposal, he sailed for Europe, was shipwrecked upon the island of Zante, and perished in the fiftieth year of his age. Such is the history of Vesalius, as transmitted to us from the earliest periods, and generally conceded to be true. A very extraordinary version, however, having, within the last two or three years, met the public eye, in the shape of a well-written narrative, the main incidents of which are believed by some to be founded in fact, I shall take the liberty to condense for your amusement, if not for your benefit, some of the statements, more especially as the source from which they are derived, may not be very accessible to most medical readers. The account is professed to have been derived from an ancient manuscript, on parchment, accidentally found between the backs of two pictures, glued together, each picture in the style of Titian, and supposed to be the work of his hand.

"Andrea Vesale," says the manuscript, "first saw the light in the city of Brussels, in the year 1614. His father was an apothecary, attached to the personal service of the Princess Margaret, aunt of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and governess of the Low Countries. Providence conferred upon him the double advantage of being a native of the land which divides with Italy the glory of being the richest and the most



enlightened among the nations of the earth, of coming into the world at a period when a general and healthy ferment in the minds of men, had, in a great measure, tended to break through and disperse the stagnant scum of ignorance and barbarism which had hitherto obscured them. Already had this irrepressible movement led to results the most glorious, and the several discoveries of gunpowder, of printing, and the still more important one of the New World, in opening a boundless field for the energies of mankind, had given a new and ennobling direction to their destinies. The spirit of the times in which Vesale was born, naturally influenced his character and pursuits, and tended to develop the peculiar bent of his genius. In an age when discovery had become the ruling passion of men's minds, nothing of minor importance appeared worthy of exciting Vesale's energies; and in the aim and attainment of his noble ambition, difficulties, dangers and obstacles, that would have daunted and discouraged one less determined, served only to lend new strength to his efforts to advance himself in the career he had chosen.

"His parents had educated him for the medical profession; his own peculiar genius directed him to the study of anatomy, which he pursued with an ardor that led to the most successful results. Up to the period when Vesale first rendered himself conspicuous, the anatomy of the human body was so imperfectly understood as scarcely to merit that the term of *science* should be applied to the dim and confused ideas entertained of it. Vesale was the first to break through the trammels with which ignorance and bigotry had crippled the march of science; surmounting, with admirable courage and constancy, the disgust, the terror, and even the peril, inseparable from the description of labor to which he had devoted himself, he was to be seen whole days and nights in the cemeteries, surrounded by the festering remnants of mortality, or hovering about the gibbets, and disputing with the vulture for its prey, in order to compose a perfect skeleton from the remains of executed criminals left there to be devoured by the carrion bird.

"It was during a sojourn at Basle, after his return from Italy, that Vesale first beheld, at the house of Hans Holbein, the painter, Isabella Van Steenwiyk, the daughter of a merchant at Haerlem, who was destined to exercise some influence over his future life. Vesale was then scarcely twenty-eight years of age, and already he had attained the summit of his well-directed ambition. He enjoyed the countenance and friendship of the celebrated men of the day. Erasmus, Melancthon, Veltwyck, Verazio, Holbein, and Titian, were proud to be numbered among his friends. The Emperor Charles the Fifth, informed by public rumor of the extraordinary talents of the young professor,



bestowed upon Vesale, without solicitation, the important charge of his first physician. At the very moment when these honors were so fast accumulating, Vesale first saw Isabella Van Steenwiyk, and a vision of happiness dawned upon him from her calm blue eyes. The family of Van Steenwiyk was a wealthy and honorable one, far superior to that of Vesale in birth and fortune; but the distinguished position the latter had acquired for himself, entitled him to aspire to an alliance even more exalted. The son of the Princess Margaret's apothecary would have been rejected by the rich Haerlem burgher; the emperor's first physician was accepted by him as the most eligible of sons-in-law. The marriage was solemnized, and Vesale, accompanied by his young bride, set off for Seville, where Charles then held his court. Vesale was a man of great determination, of strong feelings and violent passions, capable of the extremes of love and hatred, of the most unlimited devotion and the most relentless rancor. But he was ignorant of all those nicer intermediate shades of sentiment which soften and harmonize the character, and he scorned as effeminate the gallantries and graceful attentions which youthful wives look upon as their prerogative, and which, although but too often merely the semblance of love, are often, too, more effective in winning woman's confidence and tenderness than love itself. No two natures could be more dissimilar than those of Vesale and his wife. She was gentle, calm, undemonstrative, not to be roused into any violent evidence of love or anger, and so even-tempered as to be pronounced by many apathetic. Her fair and serene countenance was the mirror of a soul as serene, yet she was capable of great depth of feeling, although her natural timidity prevented the silent workings of her heart from appearing on the surface. She loved her husband truly; but there was so much of awe mingled with her affection, as to throw an appearance of restraint over her demeanor towards him, even in the privacy of domestic life. The very nature of his profession and occupations was calculated to increase that awe, and even to create some degree of repugnance, in a shrinking mind, which nothing but strong affection could overcome. Isabella's nature required skillful drawing out and tender fostering. Vesale, unfortunately, understood nothing of the sort; he mistook her timidity for coldness, and resented it accordingly; this led to estrangement on her part, which he attributed to dislike, and jealous distrust at last took possession of his soul.

"Amidst the gallantries of Seville—where for a woman to be young and attractive, was to command the attentions, and authorize the devotion of the other sex—it was no difficult task to arouse the susceptibilities of a suspicious husband. Vesale's talents and position, in the emperor's household, had brought him into contact with all the men



of learning and science about the court ; the fame of his wife's beauty soon conferred upon him another sort of distinction ; and although, at first, in accordance with the housewifery habits of her country, she rarely showed herself in public, except to go to mass, enough was seen of her on those occasions, to render an acquaintance with the husband of one so fair, the object of many a gay courtier's ambition. Vesale's house became the resort of all that was noble and gallant in Seville, and he, for a time, believed his own scientific conversation to be the attraction. At first, the young wife showed her usual calm indifference to the admiration that followed her, wherever she was seen ; but, at last, something in her manner and countenance, whenever one particular person appeared, or his name was mentioned, betrayed that there did exist a being who had discovered the secret of causing the blood to flow more tumultuously through her veins. That person was Don Alvar de Solis ; and, as he was young, handsome, gay, and the most inconstant gallant in Seville, the suspicions of Vesale were painfully aroused. He took silent note of the unusual emotions that agitated Isabella, whenever that nobleman was in her presence. The general conduct of Don Alvar was calculated to baffle suspicion, being marked by indifference. This would have misled the vigilant husband, had he not, on one occasion, when his back was turned towards Don Alvar, perceived him, in an opposite mirror, fix his kindling eyes upon Isabella, with an expression not to be mistaken ; while she grew red and pale by turns, and then, as though unable to surmount her agitation, rose and left the room. Shortly after, Vesale received an anonymous note, saying, 'Look to your wife and Don Alvar de Solis, and be not deceived by appearances. They only wait a fitting opportunity to dishonor you. Even now he carries about the glove she dropped for him at mass.' Vesale shut himself up to ponder over the most effectual mode of avenging himself. His resolution was promptly taken. He had established schools of anatomy at San Lucar and Cordova, obtained the emperor's permission to visit them, quitted Seville ostensibly for that purpose, but returned the same night, concealed himself in a tenement belonging to him, at some distance from his abode in the Alcazar, which was devoted to the double purpose of a laboratory and dissecting room. He had taken no person into his confidence ; he was alone with his vengeance, and he listened only to its counsels. At dusk, on the following evening, he issued forth, muffled to the eyes in a woman's mantle and hood, and left a letter at Don Alvar's habitation, containing an embroidered glove of Isabella, and these words : "I have obtained the key of Vesale's laboratory during his absence ; be at the gate an hour after midnight, and you will be admitted on pronouncing the name of



Isabella." The assignation was punctually kept by Don Alvar. At half an hour past midnight, he left his house alone, but he never returned to it. Whither he had gone none could say, nor could any trace of him ever be discovered. It was supposed he must have missed his footing, and fallen into the Guadalquiver, near which his abode was situated, and that his body had been swept away by its waves into the ocean. Such an occurrence was calculated to produce a great sensation in the place where it happened ; and Vesale, recalled, three weeks after, by the illness of his wife, found the disappearance of Don Alvar the theme of every tongue. The altered appearance of Isabella was attributed by Vesale to grief for the mysterious absence of Don Alvar, and that conviction took from him all pity for her sufferings. It chanced to be the festival of Santa Isabella, and, to do honor to her patron saint, as well as to celebrate the return of her husband, Isabella put on her wedding-dress, and seating herself by an open casement that overlooked the Alcazar gardens, she watched for his coming. But whilst her eyes were vainly fixed upon the path by which she expected him to appear, a hand was laid upon her shoulder, and turning round, she beheld Vesale standing by her side. "I have ordered the supper to be laid in my study," said he, and, taking her hand, he led her away to the room in question, dismissed the attendant, and closed the door. Everything wore a festive air, yet the repast was cheerless. Perceiving that she tasted nothing, Vesale poured a few drops from a vial of elixir into a cup of Malaga wine, and presenting it to her, "Drink this," he said ; "it is a sovereign cure for the complaint you are suffering from." "Pledge me in the draught," she replied, filling up a goblet from the same flask, and handing it to him, "and it will bring quicker healing to me. Let us drink to our absent friends, Andrea." Vesale accepted the offering, and they emptied their goblets together. "Talking of absent friends," said he, suddenly fixing his eyes upon her, "you have not yet spoken to me of Don Alvar de Solis. Are all hopes of hearing of him relinquished?" Isabella started, and blushed. "Nothing is known of him," she stammered ; "a strange mystery envelops his disappearance." "What if I should be able to clear it up," returned her husband, "and tell you wherefore he has disappeared, and whither he has gone? Don Alvar de Solis," he continued, "was a braggart and a libertine, and boasted that no woman ever resisted his seductions, that no husband ever suspected the injury he was preparing for him." Then grasping his wife by the hand, he led her up to a door at the further end of the room, and throwing it wide open, revealed to her view a human skeleton, suspended within, holding, in one of its bony hands,



one of her own embroidered gloves. "Behold," he said, pointing at the ghastly spectacle, "the gallant and beautiful Don Alvar de Solis—the object of your guilty love. Contemplate him well, if the sight can render your last moments happier, for you are about to die too: the wine I have just given you was poisoned!" When the last dreadful sentence, and its still more dreadful illustration, burst upon her affrighted senses, she became paralyzed with excess of emotion; the scream, which had risen to her throat, died there in strangled murmurs, and, sinking back, she fell as one dead upon the arm of Vesale. She was not dead, however; he had not poisoned her; that crime he had hesitated to commit, yet he was not the less her murderer. Convulsion followed convulsion, and, at last, she died; and, in that supreme moment, the hour that preceded death, Vesale, who had never quitted her, beheld one of those phenomena which sometimes attend the dying. Awaking from a torpid slumber, consciousness and memory returned at once, and with them a calm and a courage she had never possessed in the flush of life. "Andrea," said she, fixing her dim eye upon her husband, "I am dying by your hand, yet I am innocent; I never wronged you in thought or deed. Don Alvar pursued me with his love and his threats, but I repulsed him. I never loved but you! I feared and honored you as much as I loved—but I dared not tell you of his pursuit! Oh, Andrea, believe my words; the dying deal not in falsehood! Should I be thus calm, were I guilty?" Vesale, sinking upon his knees, solemnly protested his faith in the innocence of his wife, and, with choking sobs, adjured her to believe that he had only feigned to give her poison; that he could not nerve his hand to take away her life; that the terror of death, and not death itself, was upon her! And, while he yet spoke, Isabella murmured, "Thanks be to Heaven for this!" and drawing his hand towards her, laid it upon her heart, and, as she did so, it ceased to beat.

"Long years passed away; Charles the Fifth had abdicated, and Philip the Second had succeeded to the throne of Spain, and removed his court from Seville to Madrid. Vesale had become to the son what he had been to the father, and his worldly honors and credit continued in the ascendant, and in the midst of his prosperity, the dark secret of his heart had ceased to torment him. But, at the end of nearly twenty years of unparalleled favor, a strange and unmerited accusation suddenly precipitated him to the lowest abyss of misfortune—the charge of having opened the body of a Spanish gentleman, as before stated, and caused his death. The accusation was wholly false; Vesale was too skillful to have committed so deplorable an error; yet it obtained credence, and he was condemned by the Inquisition to death; but the sentence was com-



muted, by the supplication of the king, to a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Various and painful were his adventures in the land of exile ; but at last, his penance being over, he embarked at Jaffa to return to Europe. A violent storm soon arose, and it being evident there was no possibility of saving the ship, Vesale lashed himself to a spar, and committing himself to the waves, was picked up, several hours afterwards, by a Cyprus galley, and landed in Venice, without a single earthly possession, save the clothes upon him, and an enameled likeness of his wife, which he had worn ever since her death. The man who had once been the friend and companion of kings, honored, wealthy and renowned, was now an outcast and a beggar, and had not where to lay his head. But a change had now come over his mind, more remarkable even than that which had befallen his fortunes. Filled with late remorse for the crime he had committed so many years before, and recognizing the justice of the chastisement which had at last overtaken him, the idea of returning to the world had become intolerable, and he sighed only for a retreat in some religious community, where he might pass the remainder of his days in making his peace with God. He possessed one friend in Venice, and to him he had recourse in his destitution, and, under the seal of secrecy, confided to him the dark passages of his life. The illustrious Titian shrank not from the misery of his early friend. He received Vesale as a brother, combated his desire for retirement with all the powers of his mind, and when he found his arguments unavailing, he obtained for the destitute stranger admission into a convent of Dominican friars. But before Vesale entered that holy asylum, the news of the loss of the ship in which he had sailed from Jaffa, reached Venice, and his own name was specified among the remnants of the crew and passengers, who had been cast ashore on the island of Zante, on the 15th of October, 1664, and had there died of starvation.

"Thus was Vesale's death announced to the world, while he yet lived ; and thus in after ages will it be believed that he actually did perish. On the day of his taking the cowl, he bade an eternal adieu to Titian, and received from his hand a double picture, painted by him at the request of Vesale, in order that not only the *memory*, but the image of his crime might be ever before him. One side represented the beautiful countenance of his wife, copied from the enameled likeness, which was all he had saved from the wreck of his fortunes ; the other that dreadful scene that made him doubly a murderer. These pictures were his sole companions in his cell ; the sole witnesses of the fasts and macerations and anguish of soul which have been his preparation for eternity ; perhaps they may become the witnesses that shall divulge to future ages the history of a crime and an expiation, which had alike remained a secret



for the generation among which they passed. That the subject of them may not remain a mystery to their future possessors, Andrea Vesale has himself traced this transcript of his glory, his guilt and his misery. Already dead to the world, he has learned to think of himself as one long since in the grave. One wish alone connected with earth had still power to move him—he would fain lay his bones in the far land of his birth. Ye into whose hands this writing may fall, pray that his last desire may have been gratified; pray, above all, that his penitence may not have been unavailing.

“ Signed, ANDREA VESALE, 1567.”

Thus ended the strange manuscript; and it would appear from the fact of the picture in which it was enclosed, having been traced to a Dominican convent in Brussels, that the last earthly wish of Andrea Vesale had, indeed, been fulfilled, and that he had closed his earthly pilgrimage in the land of his fathers.

This story, which I have thus introduced to your notice in the smallest possible space abbreviation would allow to make it intelligible, is certainly a very interesting and romantic one. Whether it be true, however, or altogether fabulous, is another affair. That there appears to be some foundation for the incidents embodied and set forth, I may remark, that upon inquiring at Brussels, among medical friends, respecting Vesalius, and his tragical end, some observed that it was far from certain that he had been lost upon the island of Zante, whilst others hinted at old manuscripts which were said to contain statements and rumors of an extraordinary kind. These views, I understand, are also entertained by a very learned medical antiquary of this country, who remembers, in the course of his reading, to have met with details bearing a striking resemblance to the foregoing. One thing is certain—that the writer of the “*story*”—an English lady, I believe—must have possessed very minute and circumstantial knowledge of the times in which Vesalius lived, and of the history of his works. Having myself long taken a deep interest in the character and history of Vesalius, from having possessed a very splendid copy of his works, illustrated by the drawings of Titian, which I presented, some years back, to an anatomist in every way worthy of them—the late Dr. Godman—I confess I was unusually struck with the narrative I have embodied in this lecture, and have been induced to give it a place from the hope that some one, either in this country, or abroad, may think it worth while to investigate the matter, for the sake of truth, and to rescue the memory of one of the greatest men that ever adorned any profession, from obloquy and disgrace, if there should be no foundation whatever for the allegations. Story-tellers and tale-mongers have, undoubtedly, to a certain extent, poetical



license, yet seldom go so far as to introduce *real* names into romance, and charge with high crimes and misdemeanors, distinguished characters who never perpetrated them. To allow this, would be to endanger the reputation of some of the purest men that ever lived, from Harvey, and Sydenham, and Hunter, down to Rush, and Wistar, and Physick. With these comments, I terminate my account of Belgium, and propose, in the next lecture, to speak of Germany, and of Holland, their great medical men and interesting institutions.

THE END.