

An historical investigation into the first appearance of the venereal disease in Europe : with remarks on its particular nature : to which are added, observations on the non-necessity of quarantines being observed against the plague, by the vessels arriving from the Mediterranean at British, French, and other ports / by M. Sanchez ; translated from the French by Joseph Skinner.

Contributors

Sanches, António Nunes Ribeiro, 1699-1783.
Skinner, Joseph.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

London : Printed for J. Johnson, 1790.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/thkbbdac>

Provider

Royal College of Surgeons

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

A N
HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION
INTO THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF
THE VENEREAL DISEASE
IN EUROPE.

WITH
REMARKS ON ITS PARTICULAR NATURE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NON-NECESSITY OF QUARANTINES BEING OBSERVED AGAINST THE PLAGUE, BY THE VESSELS ARRIVING FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AT BRITISH, FRENCH, AND OTHER PORTS.

BY M. SANCHEZ,
DOCTOR OF THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF PARIS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY JOSEPH SKINNER, SURGEON,
TRANSLATOR OF FONTANA ON POISONS, &c.

L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1790.

HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

OF THE DISEASE

THE VENEREAL DISEASE

IN EUROPE

WITH

REMARKS ON ITS NATURE

AND

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE MORBIDITY OF GONORRHOEA
AND THE REMEDIES EMPLOYED AGAINST THE DISEASE
THE VENEREAL DISEASE BEING THE MOST COMMON
AND AT THE SAME TIME THE MOST DANGEROUS

BY J. M. S. J. J. J.

DOCTOR OF THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF PARIS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY ROBERT SKINNER, SURGEON

OF THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF PARIS

LONDON

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

1790

THE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

DOCTOR CASTRO, a physician, resident in London, having translated into English a Dissertation, published at Paris in French, *On the Origin of the Venereal Disease*, sent a copy of his translation to the celebrated Van Swieten. The proofs adduced by Castro were not of sufficient force to induce this learned Commentator, to give up the old doctrine to which he had before subscribed, of the *lues venerea* having been conveyed to Europe from America.

As he was then busied in composing the fifth and last volume of
a his

his Commentaries on Boerhaave's Aphorisms, he combated the above Dissertation, at the beginning of his article *de Lue Venerea*, objecting to the greater part of Castro's proofs, as negative, and consequently insufficient. This fifth volume of his Commentaries was not published till the year 1772, after the author's death.

I have carefully perused Van Swieten's objections, and have spent some time and pains in collecting a greater number of proofs than were brought by Castro, to demonstrate *historically*, that the venereal disease appeared in Italy, for the first time, in the month of March 1493, and that it was not brought from America, as many writers have pretended, by Christopher Columbus and his companions.

The observations and remarks are
so

so arranged, as to show beneath the authors who have either supplied or suggested them; and these authors are placed according to the order of time, when their works, quoted by me, were printed.

is arranged, as to show beneath the
authors who have either supplied or
suggested them; and these authors
are placed according to the order of
time, when their works, quoted by
me, were printed.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

THE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IT has been a matter of much perplexity and serious debate amongst medical writers, when, and from whence, the venereal disease was introduced into Europe. The greater part of these writers have persuaded themselves that it was brought by Columbus and his companions from St. Domingo, merely because it raged with great violence in Europe, shortly after the return of the above navigators from their first voyage.

Although the proofs of those who have bestowed this origin on the venereal disease, as it has prevailed in Europe, have all been equivocal, still greater counter-demonstrations have been needed, than those which have been hitherto adduced. In a dispute of this nature nothing but infallible proofs can cause the scale to preponderate on the one side or the other.

To this end, Dr. Sanchez, in his present work, has with great industry brought forward a series of incontrovertible facts, such as bid defiance to all theory and conjecture, many of them being founded on the writings of authors of veracity

and repute, antecedent to the first return of Columbus from his American discoveries.

It would seem that the different appearances the *lues venerea* puts on, in the different stages of its existence in any country, have been the great cause of the subject having been so much argued. From being at the first onset highly inflammatory and exalted, as well as infectious and general in its attacks, it becomes in a great measure chronic and limited, and at length is weakened to such a degree, that there is every probability of its having been, in many instances, from its first existence in the world, entirely worn out: in support of this hypothesis many physical causes of climate &c. might be brought.

This may be the principal source of the scepticism which has prevailed as to its probable great antiquity. The diseases, all very similar, described by Gordonius, who wrote five centuries back, by Plutarch, by Celsus, and by our countryman Becket, as also that called *execrable* amongst the Scythians, are all denied to have been venereal, because not perfectly similar to the venereal disease we *now* know in Europe.

But even this disease is not the same every where: it is much more inflammatory and destructive, for instance, at Naples and Leghorn, than in London; and on this account it may have received, together with many others, the
titles

titles of the French and Neapolitan disease. When carried by the soldiers and sailors last war from Great Britain to our then American settlements, which were almost entirely free from it *, its effects were infinitely more violent and sudden, than they have latterly been known to be in Europe. This must unquestionably have been owing to climate; since in Virginia, from a morbid disposition of the air, without any venereal taint, the penis, testicles, and scrotum, are frequently known to gangrene.

To remove from any country the odium of having intailed this disease on another, is a satisfaction to the philosopher, and the man of liberality

* That the American colonies, at the breaking out of the last war, were in a great measure strangers to the *lues venerea*, was owing to their sagacious regulations respecting matrimony, almost generally embraced, and the morals of the people. When a woman was discovered to have a promiscuous intercourse with the men, she was transported to the Bay of Honduras.—“Increase and multiply,” was, and still is, the motto of the Americans.

But in the back settlements of North America, the Indians, who do not observe the same precautions, have amongst them this disease, which they have long known. They are very expert in curing it, with the root, far more pungent and acrid than that of our mezerion, of the *lobelia serotina*. With this they also remove obstinate dysenteries. The negroes call it the bloody root, from the dark sanguine colour of its juice when fresh.

and sentiment. To make it appear that it has been known from a very remote period in many countries, where it has assumed a variety of shapes, may lead to many curious physical investigations.

The author of this treatise asserts with confidence, that if the celebrated Sydenham had been master of the positive facts he (Sanchez) has been at the pains to establish, he would never have insisted, as he has done in his commentaries, on the American origin of the disease which prevails at present in Europe.

This may equally apply to Astruc and the other writers who accord with Sydenham. Amongst these I cannot pass over Mr. Turnbull, a navy surgeon, and surgeon to the Eastern Dispensary, since he treats the subject with an unusual candour.

Amongst our countrymen, he follows Astruc as a professed writer on the history of the venereal disease, on which he reasons shrewdly, and displays much reading and erudition, bringing forward, *without torturing them*, as is generally the case, the arguments of his opponents.

Mr. Turnbull, in his researches, has had the advantage of those who have preceded him on the same ground. The circuitous voyagers have supplied him with opinions relative to the introduction by Europeans of the venereal disease into
the

the Sandwich Islands. I shall now briefly examine these opinions, and endeavour to show their fallacy.

Mr. Samwell, surgeon of the Discovery, during the last circuitous voyage, had boldly come forward in the cause of truth, to state the circumstances which attended the death of Captain Cook, an event before much misrepresented.

The zeal and integrity which impelled him on this occasion, have induced him to publish also the result of his enquiries respecting the venereal disease, at the Sandwich Islands; by which it would appear, that the reproach of having introduced it amongst the natives, is entirely removed from the English discoverers.

Mr. Samwell, joined to an inquisitive and deeply penetrative genius, has had the advantage of a liberal education, which enabled him to form and digest, for the most part, the account of the languages of the Sandwich Islands, given in Captain Cook's last voyage. Consequently much trust is to be reposed in what he advances.

He sets out by observing, that our late navigators to the South Sea Islands, were, without sufficient ground, led to believe that the venereal disease was introduced amongst the inhabitants by Europeans; and that this opinion, implicitly adopted by the public, has cast a great, though

unmerited, stigma, on the late important voyages of discovery to those seas.

On carefully investigating the basis upon which these assertions have been made, so as to confirm the result of his enquiries amongst the natives, he feels a perfect conviction that the disease was known at the Sandwich Islands, before they were discovered by the English.

Mr. Samwell having it much at heart to place his discovery beyond the reach of cavil or contradiction, has availed himself of the opportunity, which subsequent voyages to these islands have afforded him, of directing further enquiries to the subject.

He has conversed with a native of one of the Sandwich islands lately arrived in England; and, more particularly, with Captain Dixon, and other officers of the ships which lately visited the South Seas. Amongst other proofs, they mention that an Indian, a man of great intelligence, embarked on board one of the ships with a view of coming to England, but died in China.

This Indian had been with them about two years, and in that time had acquired a sufficient knowledge of the English language to make himself readily understood. He recollected very well the discovery of the Sandwich islands by Captain Cook, and not only acknowledged, that the venerable

venereal disease was then known amongst them, but declared that he had himself been twice infected by it before that event took place.

This fact fully confirms the truth of Mr. Samwell's observations; and he is of opinion that future enquiries will prove, that the disease existed in all the South Sea Islands, before they were discovered by Europeans, notwithstanding what has been asserted to the contrary, by those who were misled by a want of a sufficient knowledge of the language of the natives*.

From these corresponding facts, and the arguments of Doctor Sanchez in the present work, may we not be led to conclude, that the venereal

* The following incident will show how difficult it was, in Captain Cook's time, to procure any information which could be depended on, from the natives of the Sandwich islands.

The Resolution and Discovery separated for about a fortnight off Owhyëe. Towards the close of this period, the Discovery was visited by an Indian, with whom Mr. Samwell, and others, were in the habit of conversing, and picking up as much of the language as they could. On approaching the land, the first enquiry made, was, very naturally, after the Resolution; but neither the natives who flocked on board, nor the above Indian (who was along side when the ships parted) could be made to comprehend the question. The Resolution, notwithstanding, had been on the same spot the day before, purchasing provisions, &c. of the very people to whom the enquiry was directed, and appears at the time to have been scarcely out of sight, since she was joined by the Discovery before sunset.

disease

disease prevails, and has long prevailed, in almost every part of the habitable globe? That the violence of its effects, like the action of the venom of reptiles, depends upon climate and other co-efficient causes? That the variety of shapes it assumes in its different stages of existence in any country, may have caused the ancient traditions concerning it to be doubted? and that, generally speaking, it prevails equally amongst savages, with whom the sexes are in a state of almost promiscuous intercourse, and polished nations overwhelmed with debaucheries—whilst it shuns those who are placed in a happy medium betwixt the two states of savage ignorance, and luxurious refinement, such as, till very lately, the inhabitants of the new states of North America, and the people of the northern parts of Scotland, the most virtuous in Great Britain, amongst whom this frightful disease is still but little known, and is dreaded as much as the plague.

The author of this treatise may perhaps be blamed for having laid so great a stress on the authority of Pintor, since by the extracts he makes from his work *De Morbo Fædo*, it appears that he had a strong tinge of superstition, insomuch, that he ascribes the epidemic venereal disease of his time, to a conjunction of the planets *Mars* and *Venus*. As the immense French army he speaks of

of entered Italy at this crisis, Pintor's idea, in a metaphorical sense, was not *mal-a-propos*.

But the dark age in which he lived should be taken into the account; and as a further apology, the flux and reflux of the tides are a proof that the planets, connected with our system, have a considerable influence over the earth, so as, by affecting the atmosphere, to assist in the production of any epidemic disease.

Extreme heat, either succeeding to, or attended by heavy rains, is a principal source, in certain climates, of pestilential fevers. This is particularly noticeable in the East Indies, where a sultry and dry season is constantly healthy; but if rain immediately follow, then epidemic diseases prevail; and this is also the case on the coast of Africa.

At so early a period as that when Homer sung and begged, when the science of astronomy was in a very infant state, the sun and moon were supposed to act on the human body, and produce diseases. This is instanced in the contention, described in the Iliad, betwixt Agamemnon and Achilles, where the epidemic disease amongst the Grecian troops, is ascribed to the arrows of Apollo, that is, to the rays of the sun, operating conjointly with the marshy lands on which the Greeks were encamped.

In the concluding part of this work, where the author treats of the plague, he risks a very bold assertion,

assertion, that quarantines are not necessary, as a prevention, to ships which have passed from an infected country, to another, the climate of which is entirely different. He denies that the plague can exist beyond a stated period on ship-board; and that it can affect where there is no predisposition, brought on by the combining causes which gave it birth in its native clime.

He has forgotten, amongst his arguments, to instance the *Sudor Anglicanus*, a pestilential disease, which was entirely confined to the English, who, if they passed into other countries, were still infected by it, although it did not attack their neighbours the Scotch and French.

This, our author's, doctrine, in regard to the plague, deserves, in a political point of view, a strict and careful investigation. The English quarantines are extremely tedious, and attended by a palpable injury to our commerce. A ship of any nation takes in her cargo in the Mediterranean, and would bring it to a British market, as the best: but the merchant is frightened at the length of the quarantine, a delay expensive and inconvenient to his traffic. He accordingly seeks Cadiz, Lisbon, the ports of Holland, &c. where the quarantine, unless the circumstances be very particular indeed, does not exceed two, or three days at the farthest.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

SECTION I.

<i>Historical Extracts from the Works of</i> PETRUS PINTOR - - - - -	I
---	---

SECTION II.

<i>Symptoms of the Disease now called Venereal, observed in Italy in March 1493—94</i> - -	25
--	----

SECTION III.

<i>In the History of Medicine we do not find the De- scription of an Epidemical Disease, similar, in all its Consequences, to that which appeared in Italy, Spain, and France, during the Years 1493 and 1494</i> - - - - -	33
---	----

SECTION IV.

<i>The Venereal Symptoms observed in the Time of Hippocrates, and subsequently, were not the same with those of the Inflammatory, or Chro- nical Venereal Disease, known since the Year 1393—94</i> - - - - -	42
---	----

SECTION V.

<i>On several Passages in Astruc's Work de Lue Venerea</i> - - - - -	46
--	----

SECTION

SECTION VI.

Inferences drawn from the Passages of Pintor and Delphini, on the Pestilential Venereal Disease, observed in Italy, France, and Spain, during the Years 1493 and 1494 - - - 54

SECTION VII.

Have the Navigators who first discovered the Nations of Indians inhabiting South and North America, observed the Venereal Disease amongst them? and have their Crews been infected by it? - - - - - 62

SECTION VIII.

On the Communication by Sea of contagious Diseases, and on the Quarantines observed during the Time of the Plague raging in any of the Countries bordering on the Mediterranean - 73

SECTION IX.

Recapitulation of the principal Arguments contained in this Work - - - - - 82

FIRST APPEARANCE
OF THE
VENEREAL DISEASE
IN EUROPE.

SECTION I.

Historical Extracts from the Works of PETRUS
PINTOR.

IN the catalogue of authors, natives of the kingdom of Valencia *, we find that Pintor was born in the capital of that kingdom, in the year 1420 ; that he was physician to Pope Alexander the Sixth, and that he died at Rome in the year 1503.

* *Escrittores del Reyno de Valencia, por Unenti Ximeno.*
P. S. Th. D. en Valencia 1747, fol. pag. 67 and 79.
Tome I.

The Pope, his patron, was likewise of Valencia ; and, when a Cardinal, resided in Spain, from 1472 to 1479, in quality of legate to Pope Sixtus the Sixth. He also lived at the Court of Valencia, of which place he was Archbishop ; and there is reason to believe, that he then patronized Pintor, and carried him with him to Rome.

Probably this might not have happened till after his return to Italy, or after his elevation to the Tiara, in 1492 : what is certain, however, as will be shown in the sequel, is, that Pintor was at Rome in the month of March 1493, and that he took upon him the title of physician to Pope Alexander the Sixth. The earliest of his works was printed in 1499 *.

During the year 1500, he published at

* Ad beatissimum et clementissimum D. N. D. Alexandrum Papam VI. Petrus Pintor, Artium et Medecinæ Magister præfati Sanctitatis hunc libellum dirigit Aggregator Sententiarum de curatione pestilentiae. Ad calcem explicit impressus per V. Virum Mag. Eucharium Silber 1499. Mense Februario.

This book is to be seen in the library of the *Collège des Quatre-Nations*, at Paris.

Rome, another work, entitled—*de Morbo Fædo his Temporibus affligenti*.

The only copy of this work of which we have any knowledge, is in the hands of M. Cotunnio, Professor of Anatomy at Naples. The professor, in his work *de Sedibus Variolarum* *, has announced the contents of Pintor's treatise *de Morbo Fædo*.

Pag. 149. “ Petrus Pintor, Hispanus medicus Valentiaë natus, de lue venerea aut primus omnium scripsit, aut certe inter primos: quem morbum *tertiam* esse voluit *variolarum speciem*. Dixitque *alubumata* motus, opinor, pustulosa progenie, qua præsertim se venerea lues primum manifestavit. Ait enim,” ab anno 1494, usque in præsentem annum 1499, quidam morbus ignotus, diversis dolorum speciebus, in diversis membrorum corporis partibus, pustularum diversorum modorum, in magnitudine et parvitate, in cute corporum hominum nascentium, terribiliter gentium multitudinem cruciavit, qui à vulgo Romano Gallicus morbus vocatur.”

* Dominici Cotunnii Regii Anat. Profess. de Sedibus Variolarum ΣΤΗΝΤΑΓΜΑ, Neapoli, 1769, 8vo.

“ In civitate enim valentina (quo sexagenarium variolatum se vidisse capite 2. declarat) aliud nomen imposuerunt,” cujus opus quod ut ex ejus calce apparet, editum est Romæ quarta ut aiunt forma, sine ulla paginarum quæ sunt 44. vel enumeratione, vel nexu per venerabilem V. D. Eucharium Silber die nono mensis Augusti anno Sal. Christi M. D. Miror neque apud contemporaneos, neque apud bibliographos, mentionem factam esse ullam, neque enim Luifini collectione, neque Astrucii eximio illo catalogo—pag. 151. et seq. in curatione tradenda mercurialis unguenti effectus in nonnullis Ecclesiæ viris—in capite decimo octavo, in quo de unguentis ad dolores tollendos agit, inquit mercuriali unguento se inungere voluisse Reverendiss. D. *Cardinalem de Segurbo* qui hunc morbum patiebatur cum terribilibus, qui die, ac nocte precipuè, in lecto quiescere, neque dormire poterat, stante tanta fortitudine dolorum ut ad Syncopen portarent ex quo secutam insomnietatem et suffocationem magnam in partibus gutturis et oris et paulò post virulentiam materiæ morbificæ, nonnumquam velut cancrorum exaggerans, eam inquit visam fuisse in *Petro de Borgia* in quo virulen-

*rulentiaë materiaë pustularum capitis corrosionem in pericraneo et craneo manifestè fecit demùm unguento quod haberet axungiaë porci recentis uncias tres, terebintinaë de pino, lythargiri auri, cerussaë, ana unciam unam, olei laurini uncias sex, succi acetositis citri quantum sufficit, ut fiat unguentum liquidum *."*

"Se curasse, inquit D. Centes, Canonicum Illerdensem à doloribus fortibus, in tibiis, brachiis, et aliis membris, cum pustulis extensis per totum corpus."

Having perused Cotunnio's work, without finding any other quotations from Pintor, I intimated to Doctor Marcello Sanchès, a physician at Naples, my desire to be perfectly informed of the contents of the book mentioned by Cotunnio, in his treatise *de Sedibus Variolarum*. In reply, I received three letters; the first, dated the 12th of September; the second, the 15th of the same month; and the third, the 24th of the November following.

* Cotunnio, in his extracts from Pintor's work, has forgotten the crude mercury, of which the other, as will appear hereafter, gave three grains as a dose.

These are the contents of the first letter.

“ Not having a particular knowledge of M. Cotunnio, I requested one of my friends, intimately acquainted with him, to borrow Pintor’s work : however, M. Cotunnio, not wishing to part with the book out of his library, I was obliged to obtain on the spot the informations you request.”

“ This work, which is *unique* in its kind, is a small quarto, containing twenty-two chapters, and written in gothick characters. It sets off with a kind of preface, in which I find the extracts M. Cotunnio has copied, in the one hundred and forty-ninth and following pages of his work *de Sedibus Variolarum*, which I have sent you ; and concludes by an address to Pope Alexander the Sixth.”

“ In the original work, I find the subsequent passages, not published by M. Cotunnio.”

The following occurs in the fourth chapter :

“ Sicque etiam in medecina contingit, quod per admirationem alicujus ægritudinis nobis ignotè devenire possumus ad cognitionem ipsius, sicut evenit hoc tempore scilicet,

cet, ab anno 1494, usque ad præsentem annum 1499, adhuc affligens quidam morbus qui à vulgo in civitate Romana appellatur *Morbus Gallicus*, hac ratione quia multi galli ad hanc pervenientes urbem à sua regione Gallica hoc morbo infectionem hujus morbi portaverunt. Et multitudinem gentium istius morbi per contagium cruciaverunt; etiamque post dies notitiam habuimus, quod iste morbus gentes multorum climatum invasit, sicque diversa nomina de eo imposita fuerunt; idcirco dicendum est quod hic morbus non pervenit solum à contagio, sed vera causa ejus magis appropriata fuit aliqua influenza stellarum erraticarum, quæ nobis visum et certificatum stetit, fuisse causam diversitatis conjunctionum planetarum et eclipses solis etiamque lunæ."

" Can we believe, that Pintor, a Spanish physician, had such a fact existed, could have been ignorant in 1496, that the venereal disease had been brought from America by Columbus, whose first return into Spain was in 1493, and the second in 1496? If the most distant idea had been then entertained that the disease was of American origin,

and that it had been communicated by the companions of this celebrated navigator, would Pintor have fought for its cause in the influence of the stars? Admitting even that the latter opinion was peculiar to him, he would at least have combated, or rejected, the sentiments contrary to his own, on the subject of a disease of which he was compiling a history."

In the eighteenth chapter we meet with the following passage:

" Aliud unguentum quidam Portuguenfis qui stabat in Castro Sancti Angeli, portavit de partibus fuis, cum quo unguento patientes *alukumata* multos esse curatos demonstravit, cujus ordinatio est ista :"

" R. Lythargiri ʒij. ceruff. ʒi. thuris—mastiche—āā ʒij. resinæ pini ʒi. argent vivi ʒiij. axungiaë porcinaë recent ʒi. ol. rofar. ʒij. M. ft. Ungt. fluxile."

" Istud unguentum, cum tali dosi medicinarum simplicium, erit multa quantitate, et reducere poteris ad drachmas cum inungere volueris ;—cum hoc unguento voluit se inungere D. Cardinalis de Seguatorbia, &c.

In my friend's letter of the 15th of September, he informs me, that on paying a
second

second visit to M. Cotunnio's library, he met with the following essential passages in the fourth chapter of Pintor's work.

“ Nec mirandum si non incepit hic morbus in Italiâ, Franciâ, Hispaniâ, quoniam, ut diximus, habuit significationem in toto orbe, et sic habuit principium in aliis partibus orbis ; et si in his prænominatis locis non apparuit nobis, ex virtute supra dictarum conjunctionum in signis. Sed cum ratione alias potuit incipere in 1494, in Italiâ et prædictis partibus (Franciâ et Hispaniâ) quoniam fuit conjunctio, ut superius dictum est, Jovis et Martis, in signo libræ qui habet dominium in his partibus,—etiam Jupiter et Mars conjunxerunt. Veruntamen sunt aliqui qui dicunt prædictum morbum incepisse anno 1496. Id falsum, quia nullam habent rationem demonstrandi hujus dicti veritatem. Primo quia experientia visum est ante incepisse per duos annos in prænominatis partibus, in *Italiâ*, *Franciâ*, et *Hispaniâ* *. Addo etiam quod à diversitate conjunctionum planetarum, eclipsium solis et lunæ, aliorumque influentia, iste morbus occultus

* Chapter 22.

producit, ut in cap. de causis demonstra-
vimus.”——

“ Indeed this book is a confused jumble of greek, arabick, and astrological doctrine. It describes, as you see, the whole world as having given origin to the venereal disease; and has not found it in the Island of St. Domingo, so as to afford the Spaniards the credit of having made this present to our continent.

The third letter, dated November 24, continues thus :

“ Let us return to Pintor’s work, entitled *de Morbo Fædo et Occulto his Temporibus affligenti, &c.*”

“ On perusing it,” says my friend D. Marcello Sanchès, “ I expected to find where it was that the author had exhibited remedies for the cure of venereal complaints to the Cardinal of Séguorbia, and the Canon of Centes de Lérida in Catalonia. I was disappointed ; but it is very probable that this happened at Rome.”

In the thirteenth chapter, is the following passage:

“ Nam unus homo infectus dicto morbo
poteft

potest inficere homines convertantes et stantes cum infecto ; etiamque potest inficere aerem cameræ et domum ubi habitant. Et sic pertransit de uno homine ad alium et de una domo ad aliam, et producitur ille aer maliciosus per totam civitatem, et inde inficiunt homines illius civitatis ex hoc contagio."

" Thus, at its beginning, was the venereal disease in every respect similar to the plague."

" At the end of the thirteenth chapter, Pintor adds,"

" Nos tamen in patientibus hunc morbum per experientiam plurimum vidimus contigisse in isto tempore, quod hic morbus cruciabat per contagium, precipuè cum muliere *hoc morbo infecta*."

" In Pintor's first tract, entitled Aggregator Sententiarum de Præservatione et Curatione Pestilentiaë, chapter the fourth, we read as follows ;"

" Talis autem epidemia, in urbe Romana contigit anno 1493 ; mense Martii post introitum solis in primum minutum arietis."

" In

“ In the ninth chapter of the same tract we likewise find the following passage :”

“ In civitate Romana, in pestilentia, anni 1493,” (nam hoc anno, in principio mensis Augusti, pestis manifestè apparuit, et invasit multitudinem hominum per sex menses et per ampliùs tempus) “ sed tamen in primis tribus mensibus fuit fortis pestilentia, et post diminuendo valdè processit in aliis tribus mensibus, *et nunquam radix inferior fuit conjuncta radici superiori*, sed semper illis mensibus dictis à radice superiori cælesti, pestis in hominibus urbis Romanæ influxura et duratura fœt, et lentè processit, et non ex toto definit effectum facere suum usque ad mensem Junii 1494, in quo mense pestis invasit multum gentes hujus civitatis *. Post radix inferior

* In his ninth chapter, and almost throughout the work from which these extracts are taken, Pintor assigns two causes for the plague and pestilential epidemics. When the one cause acts without the other, the plague is then neither so universal, nor so destructive. The first of these causes is the influence of the stars on our earth ; this he calls the *radix superior, radix cælestis*. The second consists of the changes in the four elements, such as great drought, severe cold, inundations, and change of season : these induced

ferior cum radice superiori conjuncta fuit, quia totum mensem Maii pluviae magnae effectè fuerunt in superficie terræ, etiam in visceribus ejus putrefactio, et corruptio causata est—ex qua multarum febrium putridarum continuarum diversarum specierum—generatio stetit et accidentium terribilium, in dictis febribus innumerabilium invasio *.”

duced calamities, which afflicted all Italy, from the year 1491 to 1495. See the Dissertation on the Origin of the Venereal Disease: he there calls this second cause, radix inferior. See also the part of this work, in which we shall speak of the Epistles of *Petrus Delphini*.

* Pintor, in the fifty-fourth, and three succeeding chapters of his work, entitled *Aggregator*, treats of the buboes and sores (anthrax) which supervene in these fevers. He does not there mention any symptom in the parts of generation of either sex. Those who imagine that the venereal disease was brought from St. Domingo, will avail themselves of the above remark, to maintain, that this pestilence, which first appeared in Italy, in March 1493, was not the disease called a year afterwards the French pox. However, at the commencement of almost all contagious diseases, all the symptoms do not appear at once: towards the close of pestilential fevers, the sores are usually the most common and most alarming symptom; and it is to be presumed, that chancres and buboes, in the genital parts, appeared at the close of these diseases, since, as we shall see hereafter, plagues are to be found, accompanied by these symptoms.

Extract

Extract from Sebastian Aquila.

Sebastian Aquila, in his book *de Morbo Gallico* *, speaks thus of this disease :

“ Ut nos in hoc morbo” (the venereal disease) “ videmus non enim apud omnes in pudendis incipit ; imo alias is morbus erat lethalis, etiam cita morte : Doctore Serenio medico referente ex malignitate materiæ facientis morbum ; hoc tum hodie raro accidit — quibus jam clarum est omnibus, morbum dictum vulgò Gallicum esse *elephantiasis*.”

By these remarks, and the observations of several authors, whom it would be superfluous to cite, it may be gathered, that this disease was, in every respect, similar to the most destructive plague ; and that, under these circumstances, the venereal symptoms in the parts of generation could not be ob-

* Interpretatio morbi Gallici, et cura Papiæ, per Jacob de Burgo Franco 1509. in 8vo. min.—Cap. 1^o. §. de causibus et accidentibus, page 188.

This treatise is to be found in the collection of Luifini, Boerhaave's edition : the collection, however, is not perfectly complete.

served :

served: these symptoms appear only to have shown themselves when the disease became less fatal.

*Extract from the Epistles of Petrus Delphini,
General of the Order of Calmadules.*

As I have been fortunate enough to meet with the epistles of Delphini*, a scarce book, which confirms the dates of the pestilential disease I have made known to the reader through the extracts from Pintor, we shall have fresh proofs that the venereal disease was known in Italy, not only before the arrival of Charles the Eighth at Rome, but before, and at the time when Columbus returned into Spain from his first American voyage.

In his seventy-ninth epistle, second book, dated at Florence, in March 1491, Delphini relates, that during the preceding year, there was so great a drought throughout Italy, that at Venice, not only the canals were no longer navigable, but all the rivers of the country dry. That during the winter, and

* Petri Delphini Veneti, Generalis Camaldulensis Epistolarum libri—Venetiis 1524. fol.

spring of the year 1491, the frost, accompanied by heavy falls of snow, was so excessive as to freeze up all the rivers. According to Nicholas Leonicene, Alexander Benedicti, and Sabellicus, all quoted in the Dissertation on the Origin of the Venereal Disease, printed at Paris in 1765, the inundations during the following years, till 1495, together with the earthquakes and famine, laid waste all Italy. It may be well presumed, that the irregularities of the seasons, the frequent variations in the temperament of the atmosphere, the excess of cold and heat, the inundations and extreme moisture, followed by great drought;—it may be well presumed, I say, that such calamities, felt during five successive years, from 1490 to 1494, must have been capable of producing epidemics, pestilential fevers, and even the plague itself, with the innumerable and terrible symptoms which Pintor observed and described.

In the first epistle of his third book, dated the third of November 1491, and addressed to the *Abbè Basilius D'Arrezzo*, Delphini mentions his having seen, on the arms and legs

legs of a sick person, fores of a deep black colour, which exuded from their scabs a sanies of the worst quality*. Supposing these fores to have been venereal, this distemper must have been known in Italy before Columbus left *Puerto de Palos*, in quest of the new world he afterwards discovered. I do not speak decidedly on the subject; but all the authors, who describe the symptoms of this pestilential disease at its first appearance, mention fores of this description. Fracastorius, that exact and judicious observer, has given a very accurate description of them†.

* Purgatione indiget et ciborum abstinentia ut redundantia maligni humoris ad crura et brachia descendentes facilius cohibeatur; nam ut de crurum ulceribus taceam, ostendit mihi heri vespere sinistri cubiti flexuram tetro rubore circumfusam, crustaque duriore et sanie opertam ita ut inhorruerem videns.

† Lib. 2. cap. 12, *de morbis contagiosis*, post hæc crustosæ quædam pustulæ per cutem erumpebant; differentiæ earum multæ visebantur et ficciores quibusdam majores, et pinguiore, nonnullis lividæ, aliis exalbidæ leviter pallentes, aliis duriores et subrubentes, ac *mucore quodam mucilagineo fetido manabant*, nec dici potest quantus ille mucor perpetuo efflueret, quanta sordities, exulceratæ deinde exedebant, more eorum ulcerum quæ phadægenica appellantur,

In the eighty-fourth epistle of the third book, dated at Florence, January 4, 1494, and addressed to Cardinal Senensis, Delphini warns the Cardinal against the plague, *which had not yet ceased its ravages*. He adds, that near the city of Sienna, it had been fatal to several; and that the hostile army (that of Charles the Eighth) was harassed by it. This confirms what Pintor observed, namely, that the plague began to infest Italy in March 1493*.

In Delphini's ninety-second epistle of the third book, dated at Florence, February 20, 1494, he repeats what he had advanced in the epistle above cited, that Italy was as yet not perfectly free from the plague†.

Thus,

* Cæterum caute se habeat in urbe dignatio tua, ubi mitigatam quidem audio pestilentiae vim, non penitus extinctam. In maxima trepidatione vivitur, ac pavore ne immunem per tot annos civitatem à contagione hujusmodi, five aeris corruptione, pestilens (quod abiit) atque infelix annus excipiat aiunt citra senas his diebus nonnullos peste interiisse, quæ res majorem terrorem incussit. Appropinquare cernitur paulatim hostis, qui male, nisi dei auxilio, fugari ac exterminari potest, (et quod maxime auget omnibus metum) eo tempore in armis est, depopulatur, vastat.

† Trepidantibus omnibus præ timore et expectatione,

quæ

Thus, by the quotations from Pintor and Delphini, we find that the plague raged in Italy so far back as March 1493.

The first, and, what is more, the only author of those times, who asserted that the venereal disease was brought from the island of St. Domingo, is Gonçalo d'Oviédo, during the second voyage of Columbus, at his second return, on the eighth of June 1496. In his first voyage, Oviédo has not spoken of the venereal disease.

These appear to me to be such demonstrative proofs, as Van Swieten has required in the fifth volume of his Commentaries. As I am persuaded, that he would have been satisfied with them, it is unnecessary for me to reply to his other objections against the existence of the Venereal Disease in Italy.

Pintor, in the fourth chapter of his work, entitled *Aggregator Sententiarum*, shows, that the Venereal Disease existed in Italy.

quæ super ventura est à rege francorum grave bellum imminere, omnes affirmant Lugdunum jam se contulit rex, exercitibus in immensum acutis——ad hæc metuunt ne tanta gallorum multitudine Italiam aut penitus morbo immunem, ingrediente——vitiatur ac longè magis.

Eight days after the return of Columbus into Spain, from his first American voyage, he makes the following observation.

“ Talis autem Epidemia in Urbe Romana contigit, anno 1493, mense Martii, post introitum solis in primum minutum Arietis.”

Now the first return into Spain of Columbus from St. Domingo, *was on the 13th of March 1493.*

Is it therefore credible, that the venereal disease, in the space of eight days, could have been communicated from the coast of Spain to Rome, supposing the seamen belonging to Columbus to have been infected by it?

I shall not adduce, in support of my opinion, those ulcers on the arms and legs, accompanied by several venereal symptoms, which, as has been seen above, were observed by Delphini, during the year 1495. These proofs are unnecessary, since they form a kind of demonstration foreign to my present purpose. The historical proofs I have just laid before my readers, seem to me to be decisive, and incapable of being in any manner

ner controverted: we must otherwise absolutely reject all the facts we meet with in history.

Extract from the Epistles of Petrus Martyr, of Angleria, one of the Spanish Council for the Indies.

IF we consult the Epistles of Petrus-Martyr, of Angleria, and turn to the sixty-seventh of the first book, dated at Jaen, in Andalusia, April 5, 1489, we shall find it there clearly demonstrated, that at the time when this Epistle was written, the Venereal Disease raged in Spain, as it did also in France and Italy.

I find it necessary to make the following extract:

“ Ario Barbosa Lusitano Græcas litteras Salamanticæ profitenti vatetudinario.”

“ In peculiarem te nostræ tempestatis morbum qui appellatione Hispanæ *bubarum* dicitur, ab Italis morbus Gallicus, medicorum elephantium, alii aliter appellant, incidisse præcipitem libero ad me scribis pede, lu-

gubri autem elego calamitatem ærumnasque gemis tuas *articulorum impedimentum, internodiorum hæbetudinem, juncturam omnium dolores intensos*, esse proclamas ; *ulcerum et oris fæditatem supra additam* ; miseranda promis eloquentia, conqueriris, lamentaris, deploras inferior quidem, Ari amicissime, tui cupe-rem te bene valere ; sed minime te proster-nas—summo namque semper in discrimine juvenilis ætas, qua viges, versatur. Itaque—quod te Saturnus opprimat à quo morbus iste, quam si mercurialibus volitare per aera talaribus daretur. Vale, Giennio nonis Aprilis 1489.”

If I were desirous to avail myself of the authority of this Epistle, it would more than counterbalance the assertions of Astruc and Van Swieten, that the venereal disease was brought from the Island of St. Domingo. But I plead the cause of historical truths, and will bring no proofs, except such as are demonstrative, and less capable of being controverted, than the foregoing extract. I have reason to suspect the date of this Epistle, as well as that of several others in the work in question, not only in the edi-
tion

tion of d'Alcala de Henares, but also in that printed at Amsterdam *.

Before the commencement of the year 1493, Pintor named this disease *morbus pestilentialis*. After Charles the Eighth had entered Italy, which happened in the month of December 1494, this physician, as also those whose writings were posterior to his, as Sebastian, Aquila, and several others, de-

* D. Alvarès, in a letter dated Paris, October 14, 1770, has communicated to me the above cited epistle of Petrus-Martyr, extracted from the edition of Henares, published in small folio, 1530. I have consulted *la Bibliothèque Ancien. et Nouv.* of Nicholas Antonio, and that of the Portuguese authors, by Barbosa Manchado, to come at the year in which Arias Borbosa, professor of the Greek language, began to lecture at Salamanca; but have not been able to procure the information desired. I have also, to discover in what year Petrus-Martyr was at Jaen [Giennum] consulted *les Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Hommes illustres, par le Pere Nicéron, tom. 23*. In these memoirs, I find that, Martyr entered on his first campaign, during the war of Grenada, in 1489. It is probable, that during that period, he made some stay at Jaen, which is not far from Bæca and Grenada. In glancing at his life, I find, that after that time, his affairs did not call him to Andalusia till the year 1504, when he went to Grenada to attend the funeral obsequies of the Queen Elizabeth. See *l'Art de verifier les dates, seconde edition*, in folio.

nominated it *morbus Gallicus*, in consequence of their observing it to spread itself in *Italy*, *France*, and *Spain*, at the time when the French army entered and traversed Italy as far as Naples. It follows, therefore, that the Epistle of Petrus-Martyr, I have just quoted, either was written in 1495, or some years after ; and 'tis on this account that I have rejected it, as not being a demonstrative proof, that the venereal disease infected Europe before the two returns of Columbus from America, in 1493, and 1496. In perusing the life of Sanches de las Broças, by Maianfius*, we find, that the presidential chair for the Greek language, was established at Salamanca in the year 1508. It is impossible, then, that Arias could have taught the Greek language in that university in 1489. The Epistle, most probably, was written several years after 1495.

* Francisci Sanctii Brocensi Opera omnia, Auctore Gregorio Maianfio, generoso Valentino, Genevæ 1766. tom. IV. in 8vo. tom. 1^o. pag. 9. de vita Sanctii. "In academia Salamaticensi rhetorices cathedram obtinuit (Sanctius) anno 1554—eodem tempore è cathedra linguam Græcam docebat, quæ lingua in ea academia doceri cæpit anno 1508." Gregorius Maianfius.

SECTION II.

*Symptoms of the Disease now called Venereal,
observed in Italy in March 1493—94.*

UPON a perusal of the last edition of Astruc's estimable work *de Lue Venerea*, a tract written with great order, and filled with researches which evince an immense reading of medical and historical authors, we are drawn into a persuasion, that the venereal disease was brought from America by Columbus, his companions, and the seamen belonging to his fleet ; we are drawn into a persuasion that, as the learned author asserts, this disease was communicated by the amorous embraces of the sexes ; and that three or four hundred infected persons, who landed at two Spanish ports, Puerto de Palos, and Seville, *on the same coast*, communicated it within the space of a year, by copulation, to *France, Italy, and the north of Europe.*

The beautiful style of this work leads us
into

into a further persuasion, that the above disease was then, as it now is, dishonourable, and contrary to good manners. But what I have already said, and what I am going to add, cannot but demonstrate, according to my opinion, the contrary of what Astruc has ventured to assert.

Helius Capreoli, de rebus Brixianorum, Lib. 12. * after having, in common with *Leonicene*, *Pintor*, and *Delphini*, recited the calamities which Italy had just experienced, and which still continued to exist, expresses himself in these words.

“ Sed inter cætera hæc universalis fuit et monstrosa pernicies: *pustulæ purulentæ*, magnitudine lupini crassioris, in orbem extensæ ægrotationis prænuntia; *in artubus prurit et dolor tristis: febris vehementissima: cutis foedis exasperata crustulis*, horrorem afferebat *intumescantibus*, undique tuberculis, quibus rubor, *primo lividus, mox nigricans* color apparebat; post dies aliquot, ab ortu

* This historical work is to be met with in the collection of Italian Historians, by J. G. Grævius, vol. XI. pars VII. pag. 125. anno 1492. sub Carolo VIII. Lug. Batav. 1723.

admixto, sanguine *humor* exprimebatur caputula, spongiolas dices, exhausto liquore. Quadriennium aliquibus excessit, *obductâ cute* cicatricibus, illius sedem indicantibus. *Ab inguine* mulieribus, à glande viris *scæpius* incepit; mox per universum corpus vagabatur: fere id malum præsertim incontinentes: *contactu* tamen inficiebat quoque vicinos: audivimus omnem ferè terræ orbem invasisse genus id contagionis *morbum Gallicum* nuncupatum, quem hæc tenus, ut elephantiasin ante Pompeium magnum et ante Tiberium, Claudium Mentagram Italia neutiquam creditur esse passa."

The above relation agrees in every essential with those which *Pintor*, *Delphini*, and *Aquila*, gave at the commencement of this epidemick disease. To these we may add, what Fracastorius has written on the subject. They all concur in saying, that the complaint first discovered itself by purulent pustules on the face; that it was accompanied by general pains; that the skin was covered with scabs, attended by *an acute and continual fever*; that it was not only communicated by acts of venery, but likewise
that

that it infected those who came near the diseased persons; that it did not become general till after it had been fatal to several, whom it had taken off *by a sudden death*; and that the greater part of those who became infected, were attacked by it without having had a carnal commerce with the sex.

Had the venereal disease, which Astruc and Van Swieten will have to have been brought from St. Domingo, been in every respect similar to that observed in Italy, by the authors I have just quoted, is it credible that Columbus would not have mentioned it in his journals and epistles, on which Christopher his son, * Petrus Martyr, and Antonius Galli †, have founded their treatises without noticing it? Is it probable that

* See Nicéron, cited above. He composed his *decades de Novo Orbe*, on the originals of this same Christopher Columbus, and on the memoirs sent from America to the Council for Indian affairs, of which Council he was a member. His first publications are dated in 1493.

† Antonii Galli, *de navigatione Columbi per inaccessum antea oceanum commentariolus*, inter, verum, Italiorum scriptores, tom. 23. à Ludovico Antonio Muratori editor. pag. 302.

In

that Columbus would have ventured to return into Spain, with his whole crew infected by venereal complaints, accompanied by such horrible ulcerations and scars of the face, with violent pains of the whole body, and fever? In such a state, it is utterly impossible that the seamen could have worked the vessel at sea for the space of two months.

These reasonings certainly do not amount to demonstrative proofs, but they tend to show the obstinacy of those who will not admit the others.

I am clear that those who believe the venereal disease to be of American origin, will persist in denying that it has been a pestilential fever. Pintor, however, and many other physicians who wrote towards the close of the fifteenth century, have proved this demonstratively by their observations. They have also proved that those who were infected by this disease, till the year 1500, were neither deemed dishonoured by it, nor accused either of debauchery, or

In this commentary not the smallest mention is made of the venereal disease. The author insists, notwithstanding, that it was drawn up from the letters of Columbus himself.

dissolute manners. Does not this fact, which is unquestionable, show that the venereal disease, at its first appearance, was not contracted alone by a carnal commerce betwixt the sexes? This is what Cotunnio could not conceive, when he condemned Pintor for saying to Alexander the Sixth, that in case of an attack, he ought not to alarm himself, since he had the means of cure in his hands*. Here Pintor alluded to the publication he had addressed to him.

The most striking proof that the disease, now called venereal, was not originally contracted by the simple act of copulation, is, that Petrus Delphini, *General of the Order of*

* Cotunniius, *de Sedibus Variolium*, pages 151 and 152, after informing us that Pintor had cured the Cardinal of Séguorbia, Petrus de Borgia, and the Canon Centes de Lerida in Catalonia, with the mercurial ointment, concludes with these words;

“ Sed simplicitati viri (Petri Pintoris) qui inter præcipuas causas morbum propagantes, non ignoravit esse coitum cum muliere habente hunc morbum colophonem addit operis ad Alexandrum VI. peroratio, in qua post deprecatum Beatissimo Pontifici corporis & animæ salutem, sperat fore ut ejus libelli opere et consilio, iste morbus occultus in suâ sanctitate excelsa nullum nocumentum agere et imprimere possit.”

Camaldules,

Camaldules, sent to the *Bishop of Padua* a specific remedy, recommending to him, as a good pastor, to employ it in the cure of the sick who were entrusted to his charge*.

Can we conceive, that the superior of the *Camaldules* would have addressed, in this way, a reverend bishop, if it had then been dishonorable to have received the infection? Can we also conceive, that *Pintor* would have hazarded the above advice to the pope, whose physician he was, if the venereal disease had been then contracted simply by a carnal commerce betwixt the sexes? I appeal to the judgment of those who know the decorum which was observed by the ecclesiastics of the first rank, at the close of the fifteenth century.

* *Petri Delphini, Veneti Generalis Camaldulensis epistolarum libri—Libri V. Epistol. XXI. Octobris 20. 1496. Petro Barrotio Episcopo Paduano. “ Medicamentum morbi Gallici, quod petisti, annotarum schedula, cujusmodi accepi, ad te mitto: transmissum est illud mihi à medico qui hospitalis Florentini curam gerit, et mei est amantissimus, utpote, qui me meosque in infirmitate constitutos sæpius curavit: si profuerit remedium infirmis tuis, bonum opus feceris, neque alienum ab episcopali curâ.*

These

These combined proofs tend to show, that the venereal disease, on its first appearance, was a *pestilential fever*, communicated, not only by contagion, but also by the act of copulation; and that when this pestilence first raged in Italy, it was neither dishonourable, nor contrary to decency, to be infected by it.

SECTION III.

In the History of Medicine we do not find the Description of an Epidemical Disease, similar, in all its Consequences, to that which appeared in Italy, Spain, and France, during the Years 1493 and 1494.

A STRUC has shown, with a profundity of erudition, that the venereal disease was not known before the period betwixt the years 1494 and 1496*.

In the History of Lombardy, however, we find, that during the year 555, a pestilence broke out there, which suddenly manifested itself by glandular tumours of the size of an egg, and by pains attended with an acute fever. The author adds, that those who survived the three first days, recovered; but that, ge-

* In the first chapter of his treatise *de Lue Venerea*.

nerally speaking, it terminated fatally before that period*.

No conclusion, against the opinion of Astruc, can reasonably be drawn from the relation of this historian, since we do not see in what manner the above pestilential disease terminated. On the other hand, we need details, made by a physician, to assure us that it had any resemblance to the *lues venerea*.

Nevertheless, on perusing attentively Fracastorius's work†, our suspicions recur, that the

* In Historiis Longobardorum quod anno Christi D.LV. in provincia Lombardiæ, præcipuè Liguriæ, pestilentia exorta est: subito enim apparebant quædam signacula per domos, ostia vasa & vestimenta quæ si quis voluisset abluere, magis magisque apparebant. Post annum vero expletum cœperunt nasci in inguinibus hominum, vel in aliis delicatioribus locis, glandulæ, in modum nucis, seu dactyli, quas mox subsequēbatur intolerabilis æstus; ita ut in uno die, vel duobus, homo extingueretur; si autem aliquis triduum transegerit, habebat spem vivendi.

† De morbis contagiosis, lib. 2. cap. 12. Venetiis 1584. 4^o. pag. 92 et seq. “Primum igitur illud mirum videri non debet, novos atque insolitos morbos, certis temporibus apparere, non quidem delatos ab una regione ad aliam, sed suis causis extortos. Anno 1480 pleuritidis genus quodam
erupit,

the venereal disease did really exist in former ages.

He

erupit, quod totam Italiam affecit. Nostri temporibus illac prius non visæ in Italia febres quas lenticulas vocant, de quibus supra agimus, vidimus annis superioribus lippitudinem contagiosam quasdam civitates invasisse—Qua mobrem nec mirum esse debet si et Gallicus morbus, non prius cognitus in nostro orbe per multa secula, nunc primum eruperit: venient et ægritudines aliæ novæ inusitatæque quum tempus feret, sicut et mentagra apud antiquos, quæ postea amplius nunquam visa est, hic idem morbus interibit et extingueretur, mos etiam ne potibus nostris rursus videndus renascetur; quemadmodum et præteritis ætatibus visum à majoribus nostris fuisse credendum est: de quo non pauca indicia etiam nunc sunt. *Tonsor quidam amicus noster habebat libellum experimentorum quorundam antiquum satis, inter quæ unum alia scriptum erat cui titulus erat, ad scabiem crassam quæ cum doloribus juncturarum accidit.* Is ergo cum recentissimus esset morbus, *Lues venerea* memor medicaminis, consulit medicos quosdam; num uti eo medicamento deberet, in nova illa contagione quam per *scabiem crassam* significari existimabat. Medici autem, inspecto medicamine, acriter prohibuerunt, quia ex argento vivo & sulphure. Felix nisi medicos illos consulisset! incredibili quæstu dives futurus, paruit autem, nec ausus est experiri. Ex quo profecto videre possumus, aliis etiam ætatibus visum eum morbum fuisse—ut ergo ad propositum revertamur, inter novos morbos, et eos qui raro in lucem veniunt, collocandus est Gallicus morbus.

I was disappointed at not being able to meet with the

He there speaks of several epidemic diseases, which have never been noticed in, nor transported into, other countries. He recounts the *epidemic petechial fevers* which prevailed in Italy in his time, and which had not been known there before. He next takes upon him to say, that, after a certain lapse of time, the venereal disease will be extinct; that in the space of a few generations it will re-appear, and that he has reason to think it has been observed before. Hereupon he relates, that a surgeon, upon the first appearance of the present disease, had by him an old manuscript, which contained the composition of several remedies, amongst which was one, with this title: “ A Remedy for Virulent Sores, attended by Pains in the Joints.” He consulted several physicians on this remedy, to know whether it would be proper to employ it in the disease which then prevailed. They, finding it to be a composition of mercury and sulphur, rejected it. From this relation, observes Fracastorius, we may conclude, that the vene-

opinion of Astruc, in his treatise *de Lue Venerea*, on the above cited passage of Fracastorius, with which he was perfectly acquainted,

real disease had been known before the disease above cited; and that it may be reckoned in the number of those maladies, which appear at certain intervals.

It is astonishing, says Pliny*, that several diseases should terminate of themselves, and that many others, unknown in former times, should torment us unceasingly.

Thus we see, that Fracastorius and Pliny, in common with all those who observe the general laws of Nature, do not ascribe to the conveyance of contagion from some other part of the globe, the appearance of any phenomenon, which had not been before noticed, or which succeeded a deadly pestilence.

In the kingdom of Peru, and in Louisiana, the small-pox, every tenth or twelfth year, makes most alarming ravages, and occasions a very great mortality. In the intermediate

* Plinii Histor. Natur. 26. in præfat. ad sect. sextam—
Usque id ipsum mirabile alios morbos desinere in nobis, alios durare, sicut Colum. Tiberii Cæsaris Principatu irrepsit id malum, nec quisquam id prior Imperatore ipso sensit —quid hoc esse dicamus; aut quas deorum iras? Parùm erant homini certa morborum genera cum supra CCC. essent, nisi etiam nova timirentur.

years it has never been known to attack any one. M. d'Ulloa, Chef d'Escadre of the Spanish fleet, testifies this from his own observation; and no reasonable and well-informed person can doubt the truth of a relation, which comes from so enlightened a man, and one whose writings are worthy of the remotest posterity.

Thus then, in Peru and Louisiana, is the small-pox quicker in its revolutions, than the gangrenous quincies, which, under the name of *garratillo*, were observed in Italy and Spain in the year 1530, and which spread over many parts of Europe, during that and the succeeding years. 'Tis probable, that these epidemic revolutions were more frequent than those which have been latterly observed.

In Luifini's collection of authors who have treated of the venereal disease, we meet with several, who assert that it has been known from the remotest antiquity. In the support of this opinion I shall cite several others.

Pacificus Maximus, in his poetical works, published at Florence in 1489, confesses that
 he

he had had a gonorrhœa, as also the venereal jaundice, and several other congenial ailments. It appears, that he laboured under venereal complaints from his twentieth to his fiftieth year.

Alphonfus, King of Naples, died in 1458, at which time the plague ravaged his kingdom, of an inveterate gonorrhœa*.

In the chronicle of Cardamus, we read that Ladiflas, likewise king of Naples, died in the year 1414, in consequence of an infection in the genital parts, communicated by his mistress.

J. Zacharius Platner, the Celfus of Germany, in his *Opuscula*, asserts, that the ve-

* The following anecdote is taken from a small treatise of Trifano Caraccioli, *de Varietate Fortunæ*.

“ Cum alii Ferdinandum, filium spurium Alphonfi, alii Carolum, Regem vellent, quæ cum graviter ægrotantem non latebant, adeò ut triduo ante obitum è nova Arce ad Megaram transferri voluit—iis sollicitudinibus, molestiis, curisque, anxius decessit, morbo insuper immundo et pertinaci, involuntario scilicet insensibilique *spermatis fluxu*. Adsit ergo Ferdinandus filius, et hic regnum auspicatus 1458—adeò grassante pestilentia, ut Neapolim relinquere. Capuamque secedere coactus sit.”

venereal disease is of very great antiquity. In the note below, the reader will see the passage, which proves what is here advanced*.

Calvi, a Milanese physician, in a letter to Martini Ghisi, also a physician, shows that the venereal disease has a very remote origin. It will be sufficient simply to announce this work, which follows a torrent of authors on the same subject†.

The rachitis, according to Seguismond Hahn, and his son J. G. Hahn, has been known since Hippocrates. The latter gives an exact description of the constitution of Tiberius Cæsar, of Caligula, of Julian the Apostate, of Galba, and of Pericles, all of

* J. Z. Platneri Opuscula, tom. 11. Prolusione iii. de morbo campano, pag. 21. Lipsiæ 1748. 4^o.—ibid. pag. 26.
 “ Hoc extra dubium videtur, longè antequam India Occidentalia inventa est, ægrotudines fuisse observatas, quibus nunc venerei opprimuntur; omiſſis iis quæ ex Hippocrate, Galieno, Celſo, Arabibusque, adduci solent—his addenda sunt alia quæ Chirurgus anglus Becket commentatus est, quæ omnia probant ante Columbi ætatem, &c.

† Lettera del Signor Dottore Giovani Calvi, Medico Fisico di Malino—In Cremona 1762. 4^o.

whom

whom he places in the class of the deformed, or rickety *.

The Arabian physicians were acquainted with the *spina ventosa*, which, in reality, is the same disease with the rachitis †.

The scurvy of the present time was not known in the northern and southern climates, till after the appearance of the pestilential venereal disease, towards the year 1498 ‡. Hippocrates and Pliny, however, mention most of the symptoms of this disease, as will be found by consulting Van Swieten's Commentaries.

I have had an opportunity of seeing and treating this disease, both in military hospitals and garrisons. I found it to be generally occasioned by an ill-cured venereal complaint, by the symptoms of which it was often accompanied. This observation, as may be found in Lind's Treatise on the Scurvy, was also made by M. Nitzsch, a physician in the Russian military service, and by M. Cook, head surgeon to the Russian army.

* Schidia Cyrtonosi que Glissonio rachitis est—Suidnicii et Wraßislawiæ, 1735. 4º.

SECTION IV.

The Venereal Symptoms observed in the Time of Hippocrates, and subsequently, were not the same with those of the Inflammatory, or Chronical Venereal Disease, known since the Year 1493—1494.

THE authorities I have just cited, prove clearly, that from time immemorial the parts of generation have been attacked by inflammatory diseases, particularly when venereal excesses have been committed. Pliny, in the preface to the seventh book of his natural history, treating of the disasters to which the human race is subject, recounts the ills occasioned by these excesses*.

* *Uni animantium luctus est datus; uni luxuria; et quidem innumerabilibus morbis ac per singula membra; uni ambitio, uni avaritia, uni vivendi immensa cupido; uni superstitio, uni sepulturæ causa—nulli vita fragilior, nulli rerum omnium bibido major; nulli pavor confusior, nulli rabies acrior.*

It

It is to be observed, that the *gonorrhæas*, *ulcers*, *jaundices*, and other symptoms hitherto detailed, never terminated in diseases of the glands, or bones: neither did they degenerate into violent nocturnal pains, pains of the stomach, colicky pains, hypochondriacal diseases, complaints of the loins, dropsies of the breast, apoplexies, &c. all of which have been noticed since the appearance of the venereal disease towards the close of the fifteenth century.

The venereal symptoms, before the breaking out of the present disease, were produced by simple inflamed humours, without any indication of the presence of *pestilential poison*. This supervention of malignity, observed since the year 1493, was known to Baglivi, who, as a caution to physicians, gave them notice, that the venereal disease had no small share in the practice of medicine*; that several chronic diseases, put
on

* *Lues venerea semel recepta in corpus difficulter, postea deletur ejus character, adhibitis specificis mitescit, sed non extinguitur. Immò post trigenta et plures annos, sub specie aliorum morborum reviviscit, et medicos decipit, causam morbi*

on at first sight, a simple appearance ; but that those who were infected by venereal complaints, were cured with very great difficulty. He added, that the *lues venerea* continued to lurk in the habit for a considerable time, when at length it appeared under the form of other diseases, on its being excited by some new cause. This was never observed to be the case before the appearance of the pestilential epidemic disease, which we now term *Morbus Gallicus*.

If we judge of it from the facts I have mentioned in the progress of this work, we cannot doubt but that it is a new and contagious disease, which, as has been already noticed, broke out in Europe towards the close of the fifteenth century. We have no authentic proofs of its having been known before that period.

I am persuaded, that all those who will take the trouble to compare the venereal symptoms observed before the appearance of the present disease, with those which have

morbi ordinarii putantes ; cum reverà tamen ab excitato noviter venereo fermento dependeat. Practio Medica, Venetiis, 1721, 4°. Lib. 1°. pag. 61.

been

been observed since, will find so marked and sensible a difference, that they will readily determine *our* disease not to be of such antiquity, as has been advanced by many celebrated authors.

SECTION V.

*On several Passages in Astruc's Work de Lue
Venerea.*

'TIS with a most lively regret that I find myself obliged to differ in opinion from a learned and distinguished physician, who has given such ample testimonies of his knowledge and eloquence ; but my wish to assert the rights of the truth of history, of philosophy in general, and of medicine, impels me to this step ; and I leave it to physicians to determine, whether this motive be not sufficient for my entering into the ensuing discussion.

Astruc has endeavoured to show, that the venereal disease was endemic in the Antilles, and particularly in the one of these islands called St. Domingo : for this purpose, he adduces the following arguments *.

He

* *Luem veneream in insulis Antillis à Christophero Colombo delectis, ac præsertim in insula Hispaniola, que*
nunc

He says, that Columbus undertook his second voyage to St. Domingo, on the twenty third of September 1493, with twenty-seven ships under his command. That at the beginning of 1494, he dispatched Antonius Torrès to Spain, with twelve ships. That in the month of April of the same year, Bartholomew Columbus, brother to Christopher, sailed for St. Domingo with three ships. And that towards the end of the same year, Francisco Buyl and P. Margarita, returned in the same vessels into Spain *.

nunc insula Sancti Dominici appellatur, endemiam antiquitus fuisse, et inde in Europam transmittam esse." Astruc de Morbis Veneriis, Lib. I. Cap. X.

* Decad. Lib. 5. pag. 46. The author has just spoken of Columbus, and begins his fifth Decade by these words :

" Ex continenti, ut ipse arbitrabatur, indico, Colonus, præfectus marinus rediens fratrem, Boilum, et Petrum Margaritam, ad Hispaniam corrupto animo discessisse cooperit."

Margarita did not return into Spain till 1496, when he accompanied Christopher Columbus. I shall speak more fully of this in the sequel, observing in the interim, that Petrus Martyr does not positively say, that Margarita returned earlier into Spain: he only says, that Columbus thought so. (*Arbitrabatur.*)

In the same page of Astruc's work, he asserts, that the Spanish government, after Columbus had completed his second voyage, determined to send out monthly a vessel to St. Domingo, to return from thence into Spain, for the purpose of accelerating and increasing the commerce betwixt the two countries.

Neither of the three authors, namely, Petrus Martyr, Fernandes Columbus, and Oviedo, who treat of this navigation up to 1496, speaks of a similar regulation. I should be glad to know where Astruc found the testimonies from which he draws the subsequent conclusions; and how he learned that Columbus arrived at Cadiz with two vessels, having on board two hundred soldiers infected by venereal complaints*.

These are his conclusions :

1st, That the venereal disease was endemic in St. Domingo, and the adjacent islands.

* Astruc, *ibid.* pag. 75. " Quo appulit die 11 Junii 1496, cum Christophero et ducentis militibus qui lue venerea infirmabantur.

2d. That

2d. That it was brought from thence into pain, by the vessels employed in the commerce in which Columbus and his companions were engaged.

To these facts he speaks so decisively, that we naturally enquire from what authority he has drawn his information—he does not mention any. I have repeatedly said, that neither Christopher Columbus, nor his son Fernandes, nor Petrus Martyr, all of whom have written the history of the above navigation up to the year 1496, speaks of the venereal disease. D'Oviédo indeed, who wrote thirty-one years after the discovery of America, notices the diseased state of the soldiers in Columbus's vessels*.

It

* D'Oviédo, at the beginning of the thirteenth chapter of the second book of his Indian History, mentions the deplorable state in which Columbus found St. Domingo. The Indians, in consequence of the ill-treatment they received from the Spaniards, would not sow the Indian corn, which was their only nourishment. A dreadful famine was the consequence of this obstinacy. The Spaniards, to prevent their perishing through hunger, were obliged to eat insects of every description; and these depraved aliments, together with the extreme humidity of the climate, induced a general sickness. In this state Columbus left St. Do-

E

mingo,

It is surprising that Astruc, who on other occasions quotes so many authors, should neglect, on this, to name his authorities in the support of a fact so interesting to philosophy and medicine. It would appear, that he wishes us to receive it on his simple affirmation.

The authorities this writer brings, in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth chapters of his work, to prove that the venereal disease was endemic in the Antilles, are without any foundation: the authors he cites have written since the year 1518.—But these discussions are inefficacious, since we need de-

mingo, on the tenth of March 1496, on his return to Spain, having on board the two vessels under his command two hundred and twenty-five sick soldiers. D'Oviédo does not say a word of the venereal disease;—he confines himself simply to the above sickness, as the following extract will show.

“ The half of the crews perished at sea through hunger. The island was covered with the bodies of dead Indians, the stench of which was so great and pestilential, as to disease both natives and Spaniards.”

Astruc's two hundred soldiers, who, as he describes them, *lue venerea infirmabantur*, must therefore, have been diseased through famine, and the above pestilence.

monstrative

monstrative proofs, *that the venereal disease was known in Europe in the month of March 1493.* These proofs being established, it becomes both useless and superfluous to know, whether it prevailed in Columbus's fleet, when he reached Spain, after his first and second voyages.

In this place, I cannot avoid remarking, how much Astruc, in analyzing Fracastorius, has changed the sense of his author. A comparison betwixt Fracastorius's own words, and those of Astruc, will show that the latter was resolved to stick at nothing, to persuade his readers that the venereal disease was actually brought from America.

“Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo.”

“Quod igitur ad primam Morbi Gallici originem attinet, *arbitrati sunt aliqui* contagionem hanc è novo illo mundo delatam ad nos fuisse, quem Hispanæ navigationes adinvenire, ubi ea labes quam plurimum viget, cujus signum id *afferunt*, quod tum et morbus hic apud nos primum apparuit, quùm et navigatio illa facta fuit et commercia habita illius gentis ; propter quod et primum apud Hispanos visus fuit, quare to-

tam labem hanc consistere putant in contagione unius ad alium, sed profecto tametsi maxima mortalium pars contagione morbum hunc contraxit, observatum est tamen innumeros alios sine ulla contagione per se infectionem eam perpeffos fuisse." Fracastorii de Morbis Contagiosis, Lib. II. Cap. XII.. pag. 92. Venet. 1584. 4^o.

" In utroque opere (de Syphilide, et de morbis contagiosis) Fracastorius eadem docet circa naturam et causas morbi, ut morbum novum esse, præcedentibus seculis non visum; *ab Elephantiâ et Arabum Saphati* planè diversum; in insulis quas Hispanæ navigationes adinvenerunt, endemium; indè *contagione devecum*.

" At verò ne quid dissimulem, asserit ibidem, tametsi *maxima quidem mortalium pars à contagione morbum hunc contraxerit*, observatum tamen fuisse innumeros alios sine ulla contagione per se infectionem eam perpeffos fuisse." Astruc, de Morb. Vener. tom. 2. pag. 644.

The candid and attentive reader will readily notice the infidelity of Astruc's recital of the above passage of Fracastorius.

He

He makes him say, that the *lues venerea* is a new disease, never before observed. Do we see any thing like this in the quotation I have made from Fracastorius? This author, besides, does not advance as his own opinion, that the venereal disease was brought from America; he simply says, “*arbitrati sunt aliqui,*” &c. This is totally different from what Astruc gives as the opinion of an author, perhaps the most sensible and well informed of any who, in his time, treated upon this subject.

I could point out similar infidelities in Astruc's work; but as what I have just done, has been contrary to my inclination, I shall leave the task to those who are fond of such researches.

Those who wish to render themselves better acquainted with the sentiments of Fracastorius on the venereal disease, may consult the book from which I have extracted the above passage. Astruc has taken great care not to mention it.

Inferences drawn from the Passages of Pintor and Delphini, on the Pestilential Venereal Disease, observed in Italy, France, and Spain, during the Years 1493 and 1494.

WE have seen that Pintor observed this pestilential disease at Rome, during the vernal equinox of 1493. Let us agree with Astruc, that the *lues venerea* was brought from America, on the first return of Columbus, either to *Puerto de Palos*, or *Seville*, on the Spanish coast. It is still impossible that the crews of two small vessels could have infected Spain, France, and Italy, in the space of eight days.

Pintor observed the same disease during the month of August of the same year; and afterwards during the spring of 1494.

“ Usque in præsentem annum 1496, quidam morbus, qui à vulgo in civitate Romana appellatur *Morbus Gallicus*, hac ratione, quia multi Gallici ad hanc pervenientes urbem à sua regione Gallica, hoc morbo infectionem hujus morbi portaverunt, et multitudinem gentium istius morbi per contagium cruciaverunt;

ciaverunt; etiamque post dies notitiam habuimus, quod iste morbus gentes multorum climatum invasit, sicque diversa nomina de eo imposita fuere."

Delphini agrees as nearly as possible with Pintor. From what they have both advanced, I think the following conclusions may reasonably be drawn.

1. That the French army of thirty thousand men, commanded by Charles the Eighth, when it entered Italy, and penetrated as far as Naples, was infected by the venereal disease.

2. That the crews of four vessels dispatched from the ports of Spain to St. Domingo, in the month of April 1494, and commanded by Bartholomew Columbus, brother to Christopher, were infected by the venereal disease; since, as Pintor assures us, it then raged in Spain.

3. That the crews of four vessels commanded by Antonio de Torres, dispatched from the Spanish ports to St. Domingo, in the month of August 1494, were also infected by this disease: as were likewise the crews of four vessels, commanded by J. Aqua-

do, which failed from Spain with the same destination in October 1495.

4. That the fleet commanded by Gonzalvo de Cordova, which, by order of King Ferdinand, failed from Spain for Naples at the commencement of the year 1495, and which arrived at Messina on the 24th of the May of the same year, was in like manner infected by the venereal disease; since it raged in Spain in 1494.

As a proof that the army of Charles the Eighth was infected by this disease, when it left Lyons to repair to Naples, in 1494, it is to be observed, that it was composed of from twenty-five to thirty thousand fighting men *. It arrived at Naples on the 22d of February 1495. The king gave battle to the allied army on the 20th of May, with nine thousand men, five thousand remaining behind commanded by the Duc de Montpensier. Thus we see the French army reduced, without fighting, more than one half, after having crossed, during the autumn, winter, and spring, a delightful country, without deserts, woods, or morasses.

* See L'Art de vérifier les dates sous Charles VIII.

This is the strongest proof I find in favour of what I have advanced. It agrees with what Brandhorst * has observed, in speaking of the mortality of modern armies : and has been neglected by several eminent physicians who have written on the subject of military or camp diseases.

In the year 1494, the venereal disease made a dreadful havoc in Spain, as it also did in France and Italy ; and we shall now see that the inhabitants of St. Domingo, as well Spaniards as natives, were infected by the crews of the ships which sailed from the Spanish ports during that year, and the succeeding one. According to the relation of D'Oviedo, who was an eye-witness to what he advances, the number of Indians on the island at the above period amounted to a million and upwards ; ten or twelve years after they were reduced to less than half that number. The *lues venerea* was the principal cause of the extinction of these

* Dissertatio de febre castrensi, Leydæ 1746, ad calcem
 “ strages militum in militia, nosocomisque castrensibus à
lue venerea qua sunt infecti, potius referendæ quam à na-
 tura febrium, qua ibidem corripuntur.”

miserable Indians: it was assisted by famine, and the cruelty and tyranny exercised by the Spaniards, who also, in great numbers, fell victims to the disease.

The partizans of the American origin of the *lues venerea*, may reply on the ground of the edict of the Parliament of Paris, quoted by Astruc*, establishing regulations on the subject of this malady. It is dated the sixth of March 1496. By this edict Astruc endeavours to prove, that the French army, infected by that of Spain, had brought the venereal disease into their own kingdom from Naples. Let us take a view of his pretensions, and examine what he says in the first volume of his work *De Lue Venerea*, page 114.

Without doubt he shows clearly, that in 1496 the year commenced on Easter day, but that this mode of reckoning had been corrected in 1563, by an edict of Charles IX, by which the commencement of the year was fixed at the first of January, the day of the circumcision. He proceeds, that as the Easter-day of the year 1497 fell on the 26th

* De lue venerea, lib. 1. p. 109.

of March, it follows, according to the present method of reckoning, that the sixth of March 1496, the date of the edict of the Paris Parliament, corresponds with the sixth of March 1497.

All this is very well; but he finishes by these words:

“ Atque adeò datum esse *oñtodecim*, imò viginti mensibus post primum luis venereæ ingressum, unde in decreto illo *jure maximo* dici potuit, luem jam ab annis duobus grassari, cum nihil usu vulgatius sit, quam annum affectum pro confecto numerari.”

'Tis a pity that this writer's cause is insupportable: he has certainly an admirable knack at defending what he advances.

Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.

We shall now see to what this vast display of erudition may be reduced. According to our method of reckoning; the sixth of March 1496, answers to the same day of the following year. It fell out on a Monday. It follows, that the existence of the venereal disease having been two years anterior to the edict

edict of the Parliament of Paris before-mentioned, its true epocha must be fixed at the sixth of March 1495.

But this disease, according to Pintor, raged in France in 1494; and when a sovereign court promulgates a law to stop the progress of any calamity, or reigning pestilence, it is well known that it does not take cognizance of such evils, till they are become publick. As the disease contracted by a commerce betwixt the sexes, is latent, and only discovers itself by pustules in the face, it must have remained long unknown to sovereign courts, before they would have found it necessary or expedient to publish a law to stop its progress. Delphini speaks of having seen a man infected by venereal complaints in 1491. Pintor, before he went to Rome, met with an old man, aged sixty, in the same condition, at Valencia, in Spain. This happened before the year 1493, and before this pestilential disease had acquired the title of *Morbus Gallicus*. It follows, then, that the venereal disease raged in France during the year 1494; that the French army, which left Lyons on the September of the same year,

year, was infected by it, as the mortality which followed, fully evinces; and that the edict of Parliament, which fixes the epocha of this disease at the sixth of March 1495, does not mark the precise time of its first appearance in France.

SECTION VII.

Have the Navigators who first discovered the Nations of Indians inhabiting South and North America, observed the Venereal Disease amongst them? and have their Crews been infected by it?

THE voyages which have come to my knowledge, and the objects of which were the discovery and commerce of these countries, are found in the collection of De Bry and De Meriany * ; in the voyages of Ramusius † ; in the *Novus Orbis* ‡ ; and in

* Collectiones peregrinationum, pars 9. quæ Indiam Occidentalem spectant. Francofurt. 1530. 3. vol. fol.

† Delle navigatione et viaggi Raccolto de Gio Bap. Ramusio. Venetia l'anno 1563. 3 vol. fol.

‡ *Novus Orbis*, id est, navigationes primæ in Americam.

Christ. Columb.

Vincent. Pinzoni.

Americi Vesputii.

Petri Martyris.

Ferdinandi Cortesii.

Collecta à Joh. Leon. Berewont, Roterodami 1596. 8vo.

the work of Petrus Martyr d'Angleria*. Guided by De Laet, an exact geographer and historian†, I have perused all these. The object of my researches was to find the relations of, and observations upon, not only the endemic diseases of the above climates, but also the customs, usages, &c. of the inhabitants.

In the book, entitled *Novus Orbis*, is an account of the voyages of Christopher Columbus, in twenty-six chapters. We there meet with whatever he noticed at St. Domingo, Jamaica, Cuba, Porto Rico, the other Antilles, the islands in the Gulf of America, and those betwixt the tropic of Cancer and the line. He remarks, that all the inhabitants of these islands were naked, except that a few of the women had a slight covering about the middle. He adds a detail of the natural productions, the salutary and noxious fruits, trees, insects, and ani-

* De rebus Oceanicis et de Novo Orbe, Coloniae, 1574. 8vo.

† Histoire du Nouveau Monde, ou description des Indes occidentales, avec des Cartes Géographiques. Leyde. 1640. fol.

imals. But we do not find a syllable about any endemic disease amongst the inhabitants of the above-mentioned islands, nor amongst those of Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucie, St. Christopher, &c. &c. the greater part of which were discovered and examined by Columbus, during his four voyages, undertaken betwixt the years 1492 and 1495.

Had the venereal disease been endemic in the Antilles, as Astruc, without the least foundation or authority, asserts, it must have been observed by the many navigators who visited them during the first twelve years after the discovery of America; since all the inhabitants then went naked. The symptoms of this disease, *such as pustules, and foul dark-red blotches, covering the face and the whole body*, were then very easy to distinguish, as has been seen above, in quoting the medical and historical authors who have spoken of it at its first appearance.

These symptoms are very different from those which D'Oviedo ascribes to the lues. "Columbus, says he, "returned to Spain in the year 1496, and I have since spoken to some of those who accompanied him home, such

such as Mofsen, a naval commander, Margarita, &c. This Margarita was extremely ill, and complained incessantly: I am fully of opinion that he laboured under the complaints which those suffer who are attacked by the lues.* Thus, as we see, he judges by equivocal symptoms, that Margarita was infected by the venereal disease, although he assures his readers, that he did not remark about him any sore, or other virulent affection*. He continues, "this disease soon after, in 1496, found its way amongst persons of quality, it having been at first confined to people of low estate."

Thus did D'Oviedo judge, without any real proof, that Margarita had a venereal affection. He asserts positively, that the disease was brought from America by Columbus, at his second return, but contrives to contradict himself, and lead Astruc into an error.

Let us observe that, in speaking of Margarita, he was fully persuaded, "*that he laboured under the complaints which those suffer*

* D'Oviedo Histoire des Indes, lib. 2. cap. 14. See the collection of Ramusius.

who are attacked by the lues *. D'Oviedo, then, had seen the venereal disease before the return of Margarita from America. He knew, then, what those suffered who were infected by it. The venereal disease was therefore known, and well known, in Spain, before the above period, and D'Oviedo confesses it unwittingly.

Columbus and his companions, who held a commerce with the naked indigenous inhabitants of America, must have remarked the venereal eruptions on the face and body ; and it is impossible in this case, that so intelligent a man as the above, should have made no mention of such a circumstance in his journals. What reply to these proofs can those make who maintain that the venereal disease was brought from America ?

Let us now take a view of the parts of America not discovered by Columbus, and run over the relations of the navigators who first discovered them, and were familiarly acquainted with their inhabitants. These

* Andava doliente y se quexava tantô, que tambien creyo que tenia los dolores, que seulen tener los que son tocados desta passion ; pero no le vi buas algunas.

relations are to be found in the authors above cited, and principally in the third volume of the collection of Ramufius, and the *Novus Orbis*, which works may be consulted, if the detail I am about to give should be unsatisfactory: I have rendered it very concise, that I may not abuse the patience of my unprejudiced reader.

The countries in North America, discovered by the navigators whose voyages I have perused, are Newfoundland, the Labrador coast, Quebec, Arcadia, New Scotland, New England, Virginia, and Florida. These navigators lived amongst the inhabitants, and describe their customs and manner of life, the natural productions, &c. Their names are as follows—Johannes and Sebastian Chabot, Venetians, 1497. Gaspard Corte, Portuguese, 1500. Sir Walter Raleigh, and John Smith, Englishmen, Jacobus Quartier, Champlain, Petrus de Guafr, J. Vérézano, Florentin, Jean Pance de Léon, Pamphile de Narvaès, and Jean Ribaud, who acted under the command of Admiral Coligni. I have carefully examined, in the collections of voyages of Ramufius, and Théodore

dore Bry, all that has been said by these authors and navigators, and I do not find the smallest mention of any epidemic disease, still less of any symptom of the *lues venerea*, so easily to have been distinguished amongst savages who then went naked.

If we run over the accounts of the first navigators, comprehending the extent of country betwixt the two American tropics, from the Gulf of Mexico to the coast of Brazil, we shall find them so exactly conformable to those which the persons employed latterly on discoveries have given, that we must be fully persuaded of the truth of their narrations, as well those which relate to natural philosophy, as those which concern the civil and moral institutions of the Indians.

In the *Novus Orbis* above mentioned, we meet with Ferdinand Cortès' discovery and conquest of New Spain, from the Gulf of Honduras, to New Biscay and New Galicia, comprehending the entire kingdom of Mexico, to the Strait of Panama. We also find there the voyages of Vincent Pinzon, and Americus Vesputius. The latter, somewhere about the year 1500, discovered
South

South America, from the Line, to the thirtieth degree of south latitude, and has furnished us with the most perfect detail of the manners of the Brazilians, particularly of the lasciviousness of the women, whether married or single, and the dissolute way of living of the men, as far as regards the sex : but he speaks of no disease contracted by these excesses. Several similar remarks may be found in the authors who have spoken of the inhabitants of New Spain and Peru, to the river de la Plata, and the Strait of Magellan ; as may be seen in the collections I have mentioned, and those of Hackluit and de Purchas. The latter I have not perused, but they are founded on the Geography of De Laët, who has been my guide in these researches : and I am persuaded, that, if the navigators and conquerors who furnished the materials, had mentioned any epidemic disease, similar to that which we now distinguish by the title of *lues venerea*, I should have found it noticed in the American Geography of the above exact and laborious writer.

Should any inquisitive person, fond of philosophic investigations, give himself the

trouble I have taken, to run over attentively the works of Ramusio, Théodore de Bry, and the *Novus Orbis*, in search of every fact appertaining to the endemic diseases of the inhabitants of America, he will be surpris'd, as I was, when I had gone through my researches, that men skilled in philosophy and medicine, should argue themselves into a persuasion of the venereal disease having had its sole existence in a small island of the New World, and that from this obscure and limited out-let, it should have spread itself, through the medium of two or three hundred sailors, not only over America, but every other part of the habitable globe, in the space of five or six years. This is repugnant to all which has resulted from philosophic and medical enquiries, and all that has been taught by civil and natural historians.

What reply could Astruc and Van Swieten make, to any one who should oppose to their theory, the following arguments founded on indisputable facts?

The *Niga*, an insect of the flea kind, when it insinuates itself beneath the skin, and is not cut out, causes a gangrene of the foot
and

and sometimes of the leg. This disease is endemic in all that part of America which lies betwixt the tropics.

The *Pian* (called in England the *Yaws*) is endemic on the western coast of Africa. It discovers itself by fungous ulcers over the whole surface of the skin, and often resists the most powerful remedies.

The *Beriberii*, a kind of palsy, is an endemic disease in the East Indies, where the *spasma*, or *tetanos*, is also endemic.

In the Molucca Islands, and the Island of Amboyna, there is an endemic disease of the bones, in every respect similar to the venereal disease. It first appears on the face, arms, and thighs, and afterwards produces hard schirrous tumours, equally numerous with the warts and corns which spread over the hands and feet in Europe. When these tumours degenerate into ulcers, the latter discharge an acrid, corrosive, viscous matter *.

The insect named *Vena Medina*, or *Medinensis*, causes an endemic disease through-

* Vide Jacobi Bontii Histor. Natural. et Medicæ libri sex. Lib. ii. Capita XVII. XVIII. et imprimis XIX.

out the whole of the eastern and western parts of Africa. Unless a particular care be taken to extract this insect, with a needle, or sharp instrument, the part in which it is left becomes gangrenous *.

The countries where these endemic diseases prevail, have been frequented by Europeans since the close of the fifteenth century. I shall be glad to be informed on what account, or through what exception, maladies of the above description, have not been transported into Europe by contagion in a similar way with the venereal disease. If we are to believe a single author (Oviedo, who was no physician, and who contradicts himself in his relation) that a peculiar privilege of transportation was granted to the *lues venerea*, found in a little island, surrounded by many others, and by a vast continent, neither of which was ever infected in consequence of its vicinity to St. Domingo, this circumstance becomes inconceivable.

* Aëtius Tetrab. Lib. IV. Serm. 2. Cap. 85.

SECTION VIII.

On the Communication by Sea of contagious Diseases, and on the Quarantines observed during the Time of the Plague raging in any of the Countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

AN English author *, reasoning upon the ground of experience, and the researches he has made, ridicules the quarantines which vessels are obliged to undergo after having quitted places infected by the plague. These quarantines were put in practice during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, by the Venetians and Genoese, who traded in the Levant; and notwithstanding the progress of science in Europe, this practice has been adopted by all the maritime states.

Let us agree, for example, that the crew of a French or English vessel, detained in the road of Alexandria or Smyrna, during the time of the pestilence prevailing at either

* Mr. Dale Ingram, Surgeon.

of these places, or in its environs, may be infected by it. We know that this disease, when at its commencement it was most destructive, killed in *six, twelve, or twenty-four* hours; that some time after it was not fatal till the third day; and that at length it is become so mild, that its deleterious effects are not now manifested till the seventh, or even the ninth day, when it is not, as heretofore, fatal to all, many surviving who are attacked by it.

If the vessel proceeds to sea with infected sailors on board, these will either perish or recover in the space of a week, or of nine days at farthest. Should others again receive the infection, the event will be the same; and when the ship touches at some port in Europe, after a passage of three weeks or a month, the plague will either be extinguished, or have destroyed those who were seized by it. Wherefore, then, is a quarantine necessary?

It may be urged in reply, that the plague transports itself in a concealed way, in the merchandize, particularly in articles of wool or cotton; but what steps are taken in the
ports

ports where these pestilential vessels, and this merchandize, arrive, to purify them, and extinguish the latent poison? Do they expose the commodities to the air, or sweeten them with the vapours of vinegar, sulphur, or tobacco? not at all. The remedy consists entirely in keeping the vessels forty days in port, without an immediate communication with the inhabitants*, and by this *unique* and *excellent* remedy, according to the tribunals of health, the pestilential infection is annihilated and destroyed.

Doctor William Alexander, an English physician, in his experimental enquiry concerning the causes which have generally been said to produce putrid diseases, has shown by repeated experiments, that no degree of putrefaction takes place in the human body, before the morbid vapours which escape from the air, or from substances in a putrified state, have fermented with the humours; and that this fermentation is not caused by

* In this may consist the French economy in these cases; with us it is otherwise, since the bales of wool or cotton, and covers of all other enclosed articles, are opened, and the contents exposed to the air.—*Translator's Note.*

the contagious vapours, but simply by the vital powers of the body. These irritate and contract themselves, and during this agitation the putrid fermentation is formed, and becomes the cause of a putrefaction, more or less active, according to the degree of their vigour.

It is certain that in all cases the vital action of the human body, and the free circulation of the blood through the heart and the arterial system, are the most powerful agents to preserve the living body from a state of putrefaction: but no sooner are these movements impeded by exterior causes, and spasms of the vital and sensible parts produced, than the putrid fermentation commences. It terminates either by the destruction of the whole animal economy, or, at the least, by a considerable derangement.

These considerations nicely weighed, can we believe that the merchandize received on board a vessel, although brought from store-houses exposed to a pestilential atmosphere, can occasion the plague in any living body, if this body be not disposed to receive it, as were the inhabitants of the
places

places whence the merchandize was taken? The contagion, or those particles which are regarded as pestilential, being spread in the atmosphere, are not destructive to the living body, till they have entered into a putrid fermentation: and this fermentation takes place only when the living body is disposed to receive the impresson of the contagious particles.

From these facts and reflections, it follows, that all contagious diseases are local, and extend their progress gradually. They are only contagious because several infected persons have a communication with each other, in the same house, the same city, and the same kingdom.—By these communications, living bodies in health are disposed to receive the infection from those already attacked by the pestilential symptoms, which become more and more fatal, in proportion as the number of the persons infected, and the putrid fermentation of each individual, increase.

'Tis illusory to suppose, that a vessel, which quits, for example, the port of Alexandria, during the time of the plague raging, can convey to a French or English harbour,

bour, either by the crew or merchandize, the latent seeds or principles of the disease. These principles will never occasion the plague, till they have been thrown, by a living body, into a putrid fermentation: but if the inhabitants of the French or English place (where the plague is not known) be not disposed, as were those of Alexandria, to receive such pestilential principles, they will not, as I have just explained, become infected.

From its earliest origin, the history of the plague has shown, that this scourge of the human race loses much of its activity, and sometimes ceases altogether, during the winter, when, notwithstanding its seeds remain in the houses and furniture, and perhaps also in the habits of many convalescents, it does not produce effects similar to those it manifests during the summer and autumnal heats. The cold and moisture of winter render the body less susceptible; and the active pestilential principle does not enter so readily into the degree of putrid fermentation*.

It

* The Abbé Fontana, in his treatise on poisons, demonstrates experimentally, that the venom of the viper
is

It follows, then, that the disposition of the living body, gives efficacy to this very deadly poison, and causes it to pass into fermentation. It therefore seems contrary to experience, and to the laws of the living body, that the plague, or any other contagious disease, can be brought, either by sea or land, from Asia into Africa, or from America into Europe.

In 1728 I paid several visits to M. Bertrand, who had been sent, in his capacity of physician, to Marseilles, in consequence of the plague which raged there in 1720 and 1721.

Through him I learned several particular circumstances which are not to be met with in the authors who have written on this disease. I questioned him as to the cause and origin of the plague he had seen.

is far less active in cold, than in warm climates; and, in the latter, loses a part of its activity during the colder months. Perhaps the diminution of its active quality is negative, according to the above principle of Doctor Sanchez, of a want of susceptibility in the human body, during cold and moist weather.

Translator's Note.

It

It seems he had himself been three times attacked by it, on the latter of which occasions the disease terminated so successfully by a bubo, that the Doctor, when I visited him, was in the enjoyment of a chearful and vigorous old age. He informed me, that, on its breaking out, there were various reports, some of which were committed to print, of its having been brought from Alexandria, and that, on the opening of a few bales of cotton, several of the custom-house guards instantly expired. On a nice investigation into these rumours, they appeared to be utterly unfounded; and it was determined that the disease had its origin at Marseilles, and had been communicated to several places in its vicinity. On consulting the history of the above city, it was found to have been desolated by pestilential diseases upwards of twenty times; and M. Bertrand assured me, that, in the present instance, the vulgar opinion of its having been brought from Alexandria, was not entitled to the smallest credit.

He likewise informed me, that in the year 1724, he was consulted by the court of
Lisbon,

Lisbon, on the subject of an epidemical disease which prevailed in that city, and which, according to the account transmitted to him, was a true plague. He was asked whether this disease had been brought from Marfeilles, and whether the symptoms were at both places the same. To each of these queries he replied in the negative. The plague of Marfeilles, and that of Lisbon, were perfectly distinct from each other, particularly in the symptoms which terminated fatally.

I could confirm still more, by quoting authorities, what I have just advanced against the employing of quarantines, on the rumour of a plague prevailing in the ports of the Mediterranean ; and could descant on that common bugbear, called contagion. I shall content myself with barely mentioning, that the Greek physicians, although no strangers to the plague, observed no precaution similar to that of our quarantines.

To enter more at large into this subject, would be only a waste of time, exhausted in endeavours to undeceive those who are solely guided by dread and imitation.

SECTION IX.

Recapitulation of the principal Arguments contained in this Work.

THE venereal disease was known and examined in Italy, by Pintor and Delphini, under the character and title of a pestilential fever, in the month of March 1493; as is confirmed by the descriptions of the above Pintor, of Helius, Capréoli, and Fracastorius. This disease did not attack all alike in the parts of generation. It was of so pestilential a nature, that it killed in a very short space of time: and its external symptoms consisted most generally of pustules in the face, and ulcers and scabs covering the whole body.

After Charles the Eighth had entered Italy with his army, during the winter of 1494, this disease was named, both by physicians and historians, *Morbus Gallicus*.

In perusing the works of medical authors, we find, as far back as these traditions carry us, a mention of several symptoms of
the

the venereal disease. We ought not, however, to conclude from this circumstance, that such symptoms were positively so many effects produced, by the *lues venerea* known in Europe since the years 1493 and 1494.

If we can repose any confidence in the assertions of Pintor and Delphini, it is clear that the Spaniards communicated the venereal disease to the inhabitants of the American isles called Antilles, which include in their number St. Domingo. It also appears equally certain, from the relations of these authors, that the French soldiery were infected by it, when they traversed Italy as far as Naples, where they found this disease making devastations similar to those it caused amongst themselves.

The first American navigators, in their journals and relations, which are very numerous, make no mention of having observed this disease amongst the nations of Indians they discovered.

Notwithstanding the ports of America, Africa, and the East Indies, have been constantly frequented by Europeans, the epidemic and endemic diseases of those countries

tries have not been hitherto communicated to us. Ought we not thence to conclude, if any belief can be placed in history, that the venereal disease was not brought from America by the contagion or infection of the Spaniards ; and that this opinion is utterly chimerical and destitute of foundation ?

Those who, without reflection, have followed the many authors, who, deviating from sound criticism, have embraced with obstinacy the opinions I have thus endeavoured to combat, may be perhaps led, by a perusal of this enquiry, to join with me in pronouncing, without hesitation,

“ Nec pueros omnes credere posse reor.”

THE END.