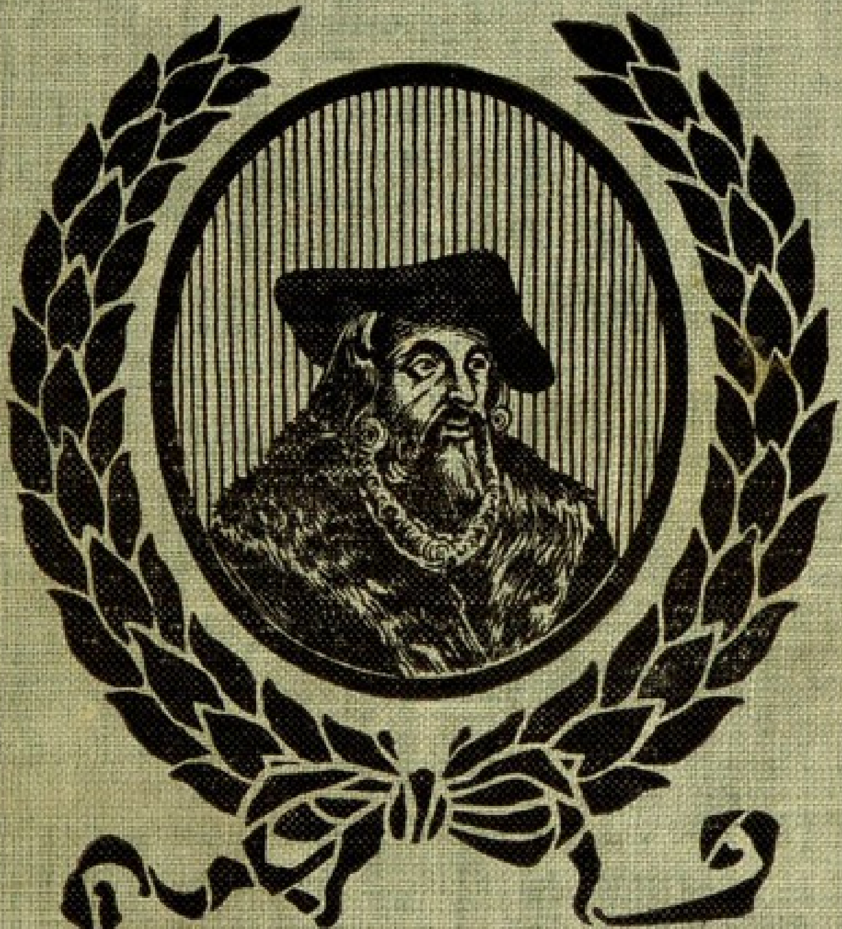
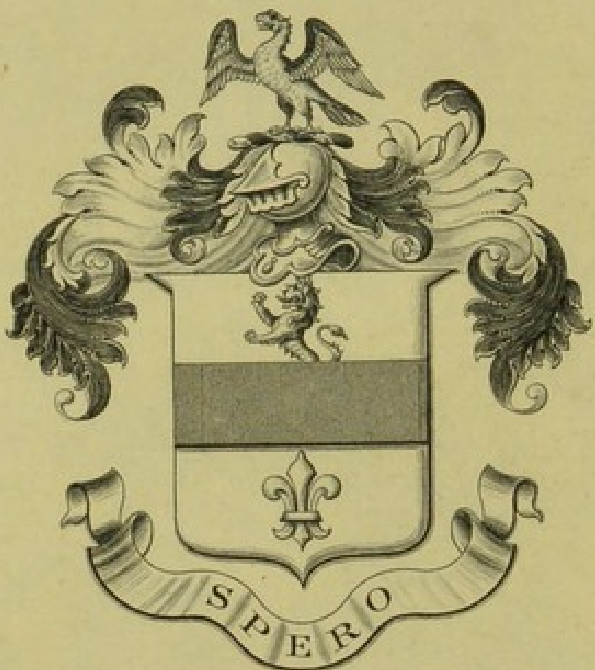
HIERONYMUS FRACASTOR'S

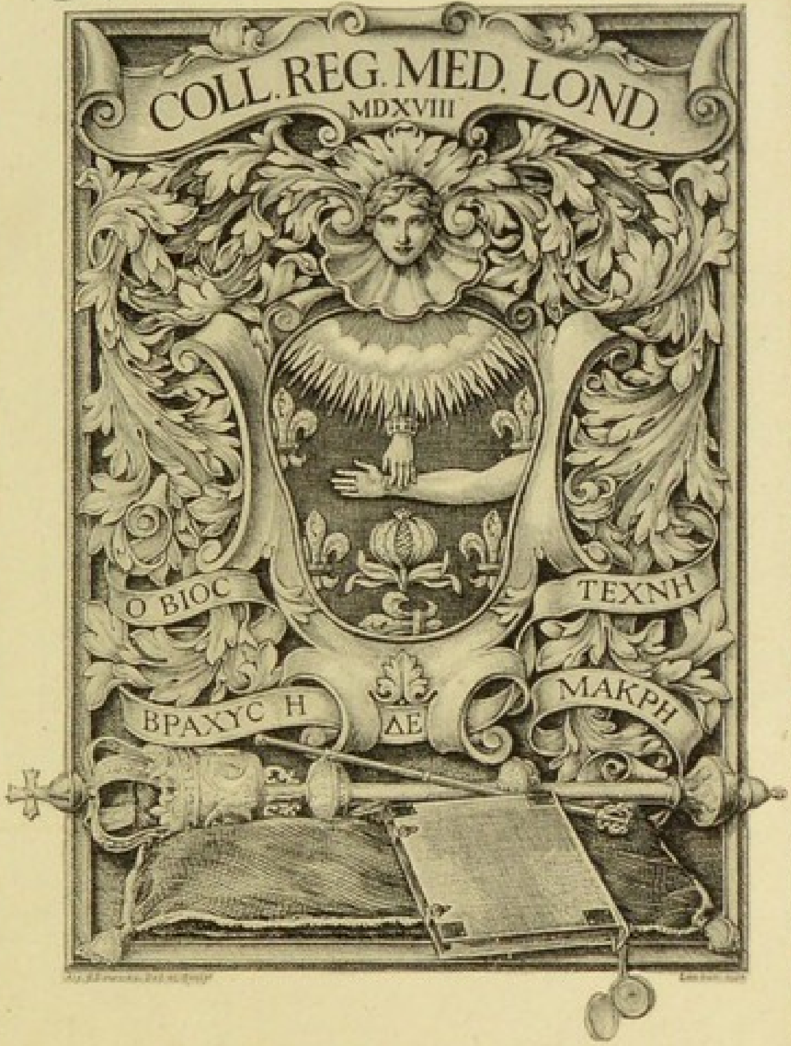
SYPHILIS

FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN.



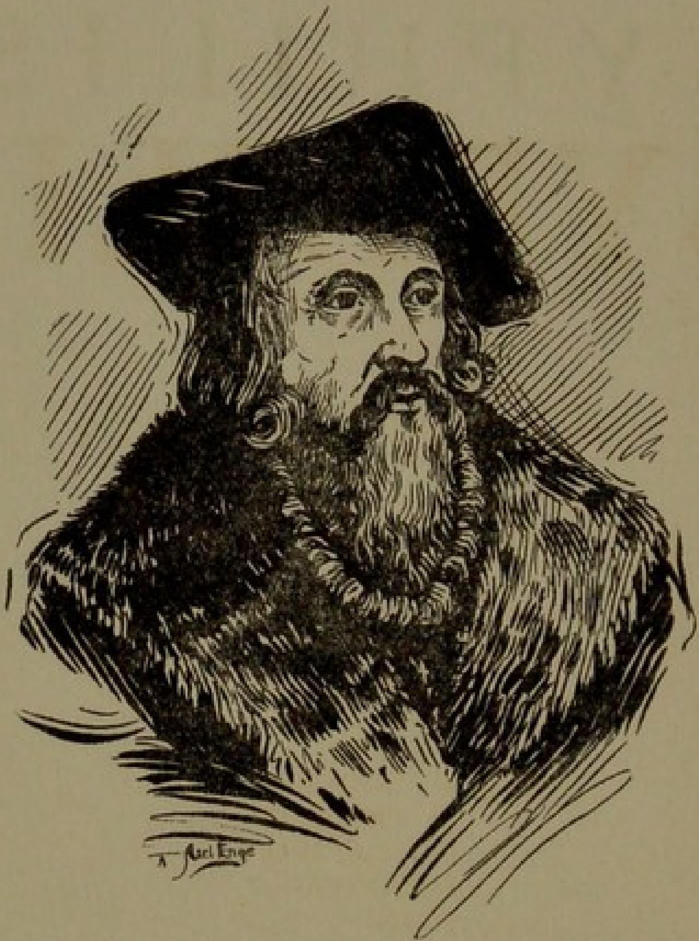
A Translation in prose
of this immortal poem.


SPERO


COLL. REG. MED. LOND.
MDXVIII
O BIOC
TEXNH
BPAXYC H
ΔE
MAKPH

HIERONYMUS FRACASTOR'S

SYPHILIS



HIERONYMUS FRACASTOR

¶ Hieronymus Fracastor was born in 1483 and died in 1553. He was a poet and a scholar and served as professor of logic at Padua. He published his masterpiece ***"Syphilis sive Morbus Gallicus"*** at Venice in 1530. Eloquent, melodious and beautiful, ***Syphilis sive Morbus Gallicus*** stands well in the front of the world's great poems and has earned for its author eternal fame. It was from this poem that the word Syphilis had its origin.

Hieronymus Fracastor's

SYPHILIS

FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN

A TRANSLATION IN PROSE OF FRACASTOR'S IMMORTAL POEM

The Philmar Company
Saint Louis Missouri

MCMXI

THIS CELEBRATED POEM OF

HIERONYMUS FRACASTOR

has endured through nearly four centuries. To the author is due the credit of having given this name which, not only supplanted the many others which had been given to it, but which has persisted to the present day and is in universal use. Whilst this poem is filled with mythological allusions it affords a good clinical description of the symptoms of the disease. It shows, throughout its lines, the erudition of its author, his keen appreciation of the importance of the subject as well as his mastery of the matter in hand. It may be suggested that to treat such a subject in Latin hexameters is not very serious but we will call the attention of those critics that the poem is merely a putting in verse, by the author, of his small prose treatise, De Contagionibus et Contagiosis Morbis, published in 1546. Born in 1483, Fracastor was still a child when the Morbus Gallicus made its first appearance in Europe. However, he did not attribute the disease to the invasion of Charles VIII., but regarded it as much more ancient.

THE PUBLISHERS

I SING of that terrible disease, unknown to past centuries, which attacked all Europe in one day, and spread itself over a part of Africa and of Asia. I will tell what concourse of influences, what occult germs have caused it, how it arose in Latium at the time that the French armies rendered desolate that unhappy country, what reason caused it to be called the French disease. I will tell how in those cruel trials, the genius of man succeeded, with the help of the gods, in discovering the heroic remedy which abated the fury of the plague. I shall interrogate in order to reveal the secret origin of this disease, both the azure plains of the ether and the stars suspended from the vault of the heavens. The field of the unknown and the mysterious domains of Nature open up before me, and my seduced muse permits herself to be drawn by the learned Sisters of Parnassus.

Illustrious Bembo, glory of Italy, if thy master has accorded thee some moments of rest, if he permits thee to leave for an instant the helm of the world and devote a short space of thy time to the muse, deign to cast thy eyes on these verses, all unworthy as they may be of thy genius. My work is but a medical essay, but remember that Apollo himself did not look upon it as derogatory to his dignity divine to cultivate the healing art. This subject besides, light in appearance, takes on at times a serious interest; mine under a frivolous guise, will cause to appear before thee the great laws of nature, the decisions of destiny, and the mysterious origin of a frightful scourge.

And thou divine Urania, thou who knowest the cause and effects of all things, thou for whom the spaces of air and the depths of the heavens hold no secrets, descend to my side under these quiet shades where the breath of the zephyrs, the perfume of the myrtle and the harmonious murmurs of Banacus invite me to sing. Give me the sacred inspiration, and may, in return, as through Olympus thou traversest the luminous field of ether, the sublime choir of the celestial world applaud thy glory.

Muse, what causes presided at the origin of this scourge so long wrapped in the darkness of nothing? Was it imported among us from those new worlds which were discovered by the brave mariners of Spain beyond the unknows seas of the Western world? Have we received from those far countries the germ where it is said it has reigned as sovereign master from all eternity, numbering as many victims as there are inhabitants? Is it true that introduced, in that manner, among us it was then spread throughout Europe by means of commercial relations? Is it true that it was born weak and obscure, to increase its force a hundred fold later on as it extended its ravages and invaded, little by little, the entire universe? Such as once, springing from a badly extinguished focus which an imprudent shepherd left in the country, a single spark sufficed to start a conflagration; the fire first slumbers and insidiously spreads in the grass, then bursts out with fury; the flame, fed by the fuel, then raises itself in threatening tongues, devours on its passage the fields and prairies, fires forests which fall with a crash, and throws afar off baleful lights on sky and earth.

No, it is not in this manner that this disease has developed itself. Incontestable testimony proves that it is not of a strange or foreign origin and that it was not necessary to cross the Ocean to arrive in our midst.

Among the first victims who were attacked in our climate, I could mention a number of patients who were spontaneously attacked, without having exposed themselves to the least chance of contagion. Besides, how would it be possible to attribute to a contagious influence a disease which attacked so many peoples in such a short time? As a matter of fact it was on all sides at one time that the scourage was let loose upon us, in Latium, in the fertile fields of Sagra, in the forests of Ausonia, on the plains of Otrantes, on the banks of the Tiber, in the hundred cities that the Eriden enlarges by the hundred streams tributary to it, which laves them with its majestic waves. At the same time, in addition, it raged on foreign shores, and proud Spain, mother of the conquerors of the New World, did not suffer from the cruel attacks earlier than the people of whom the Pyrenees, the Rhine and the Alps are the boundaries.

In addition to this it was at this time that it made its invasion among us, a people of the North with icy regions, among all of you, descendants of ancient Carthage, fortunate Egyptians whom the Nile enriches with the treasures of its waves, son of Idumea with its evergreen palms. Now, such a disease which attacks the entire universe at one blow could hardly be the product of a simple contagion; other causes must be assuredly recognized.

All beings with which Nature has peopled land, air and the water, have not one mode of creation, which is identical and subject to the same laws. The most simple, whose formation calls but for a few generating principles, are incessantly reproduced everywhere. Others, more complex, require for their being the help of many germs which are dispersed, succeeding but very rarely and with difficulty in being born at certain times and in certain places. Others, finally, come out of nothingness but after thousands of centuries, so many are the obstacles presented to the germs which are necessary to their genesis and to their union. Well, the same is true of diseases. All diseases do not have a common or identical origin. The ones, the majority even, have an easy development which accounts for their habitual frequency; but, others are of a difficult sort to deliver and succeed but very slowly to constitute themselves, after having long fought against the infinite difficulties which destiny opposed to their birth. Of this number, for instance, is elephantiasis, still unknown by Ausonia, and lichen which remains confined on the banks of the Nile. Of this number is also the French disease which, for a long time wrapped up in the darkness of the nothing, has suddenly freed itself from its bindings, after many centuries of waiting, to finally rise in the light and make an irruption among us.

It is to be surmised, however, that in the course of the eternity of ages this disease must have shown itself upon earth several times. If we were ignorant of everything even including its name when we suffered its attacks, there is no doubt that the traces of its passages have been obliterated by time, time, that pitiless destroyer who reduces to naught everything in its footsteps and who robs us even of the monuments, even of the recollections of our ancestors.

In the West, on the other hand, on those shores recently discovered beyond the Atlantic, this disease is habitual and general. Strange contrast, inexplicable influence of climate and time. In those far-off regions, the scourge reigns as a rule; it occurs there spontaneously; it germinates there at pleasure as if on a soil which has been prepared with a design to receive it, whilst it has not succeeded in developing among us but thousands of years later.

So you wish to go back, by an analytic method, to the source and origin of this disease? First of all look at how many countries have been struck and how many people have been afflicted. From the immensity of its ravages you will recognize the fact at once that its productive germs could neither be in the bowels of the earth, nor in the bosom of the waters. In order to have generalized itself in the manner in which it did, it is evidently necessary that the mysterious agent from which it has originated be contained in the air, in the air which bathes and envelopes the entire world, which penetrates all bodies, and which serves as a vehicle for contagious ferments. In fact, air is the essential cause and the principle of all things. If but too often it becomes for us the source of diseases, it is because the changeable nature of its elements exposes it to corruption; it is because it is equally prompt to impregnate itself with the morbific miasms and to disseminate those with which it is charged.

Again, consider on the other hand in what manner air may be modified in the course of ages; learn how it conceived the germ of the fatal contagion which it has spread among us.

The sun and the stars are the sovereign masters to whom the air and the earth and the waters do servile obedience. Their course and their evolutions in the heavens rule the course of the elements. Thus, directly Phebus approaches the earth by directing his rapid coursers to the South, cold winter shows itself with rigor; the soil hardens and is covered with frost and ice stops the course of rivers. On the other hand, hardly has the God of Day entered in the sign of Cancer, but the burning Summer devours the fields and the woods, dries up the prairies and covers the tilled parts with an arid dust. And it is not doubtful, either, that the elements in their state of repose in the same manner as during the great revolutions which agitate them, are subject to multiple sidereal influences which they obey, either from the moon, the queen of night, which holds under its laws the seas and all the moist principles of nature, or from the sinister star Saturn, or from the beneficent fires of Jupiter, the rays of Mars and of Venus. Those manifestations become especially marked when the stars deviate from their courses and when several of them converge upon one point of the sky. Such disturbances, it is true, as signs of divine will, do not produce themselves except at rare intervals and after a long series of regular cycles. But, when they do accomplish their end, when the hour fixed for them by destiny has sounded, then, oh misfortune; the earth, the air, and the waters are suddenly turned over to fearsome cataclysms. At times it is thick clouds which steal the light of day; the sky melts into water; torrents hurl themselves from the crests of mountains, carrying away, in their impetuous force, trees, rocks, and flocks of animals; raising above their banks their roaring waves, the Erida and the Ganges inundate cities, submerge forests, and form new streams. At other times, it is the unchained winds which blow with fury, or subterranean storms which shake the ground and throw over the walls of cities. Perhaps even, alas! there will come a day, an unlucky day marked by Nature and the Destinies, when those countries which we inhabit today will either be changed into an uncultivated desert or be swallowed up in the waves; or the sun himself, Oh prodigy! will follow a new course in space; or the seasons will be turned topsy-turvy; or extraordinary heats or colds will desolate the world; during which unknown animals will rise to the light, borrowing their principle of life from the eternal source of all creation!

Who knows whether the earth at such a time, trying itself at more arduous labors may not produce anew some Encelatae, Ceae, Typhae, daring Titans, who will attempt for a second time to pile Olympus on Ossa in order to scale the heavens, their old home?

In view of such sights, how can it be doubted but that, on some fatal day, prepared in the course of ages and the revolutions of the sky, the air can suddenly charge the world with pestilential germs and afflict it with this unknown scourge?

Shall I cite to you an example? Two hundred years ago, at the precise time that Mars united his rays with the baleful fires of Saturn, there was suddenly observed rising on the banks of the Ganges, among the people who viewed the rise of Aurora, a fever of a nature absolutely new. This fever—horrible thing!—tore waves of blood from the palpitating bosom of its victims, and but too often ended itself on the fourth day by a mortal crisis. From its primitive cradle it soon spread itself in Assyria, in Persia, on the banks of the Tigris, then in Arabia, Egypt and Phrygia; and from there, crossing the immensity of the seas, it came to infect Italy, to extend afterwards over the whole of Europe.

If then you wish to know the origin and the cause of this scourge which now afflicts us, raise your looks to the ethereal spaces, the abode of the Immortals, to search with me what the situation of the stars was and what presages they furnished at the time that this disease appeared among us. Look! At that fateful moment all the greater stars converged on that point of the sky where Cancer, the vigilant sentinel, seems to watch, his arms extended over the gates of Olympus, on that sinister point where are always formulated the unlucky signs of calamities which are to come! And thence all those united stars spread in the air their rays conjured against us! Such presages did not escape Sirenis, initiated long before by Urania in the knowledge of stars and of divine prescience, the wise old men having but seen the threatening aspect of the sky, from a high hill, suddenly cried out: "All-powerful gods, pity, pity for unfortunate mortals! How many disasters, how many calamities do I see suspended above your heads? An awful pestilence infecting the atmosphere, impious wars desolating Europe, blood pouring in torrents in the plains of Ausonia." Prophetic words which he himself placed in his writings.

The time had come when, after the completion of several centuries, the sovereign ruler of the world was, according to an eternal law, to future destinies of the earth and of the heavens, Jupiter prepared himself for this great work, to which he invited Mars and Saturn. On the appointed day, Cancer opened the doors of Olympus to the Immortals. Mars was the first to cross the threshold of the sacred place. From his impetuous gait, his glistening armor, the god of war was easily recognized, the cruel god who slakes his thirst with blood and carnage. Calm and majestic Jupiter next appeared, carried on a golden chariot, Jupiter always benevolent and good to mortals, unless contrary destinies claim his clemency. Saturn came last, holding his scythe in his hand. It is not alone the fatigue of a long journey, joined to the weight of years, which have delayed this old man; always irritated against his rebellious son and only obeying him with reluctance, he stopped several times on the road, undecided and ready to retrace his steps; even when entering he could not hide his anger nor repress muttered threats.

Nevertheless, Jupiter sat on the throne where he alone had the right to sit. He consults the oracles and regulates the destinies of future periods. He cannot contemplate, without pain and compassion, the calamities of all sorts that will afflict the world, wars, revolutions, the demolition of Kingdoms and cataclysms giving up the earth to the empire of death, a new and fearsome pestilence whose ravages the resources of human genius will be unable to stop! Despite this, it is settled, the voice of the gods has shaken Olympus and the fatal decree is pronounced.

A subtle poison at once spreads itself in the ether and disseminates its pernicious effluvia throughout the immensity of space.

What was the origin of this poison? Are we to believe that the sun's rays, associated with the malign influence of the stars, raised from the bosom of the earth and of the waters unhealthful vapors which spread in the air contagious miasms, the germs of a disease as yet unknown? Or, on the other hand, were these miasms engendered in the upper regions of the atmosphere, from which as a consequence, they descended among us? It cannot be told, how many mysteries of the sky unfold to our eyes, how difficult it is to go back to the origin of causes, which at times are separated from their effects by long series of years, and at others are mingled with events in an inextricable confusion.

Add to this that Nature may vary at its will the influence of epidemic miasms. Thus, at times, the infected air pours its poisons only on vegetation, killing the flowers and the tender buds, tainting the wheat with an unclean rust, destroying all hopes of crops, changing seeds as deep as the very bosom of earth. At other times it is the animals only that are struck, and that, either all at once, or only a few among all. I remember, for instance, in a year that was remarkable not only for an unusual and suspicious fertility of the soil, but also by an excessive frequency of Southern winds and of autumnal rains, that all goats—and only goats—were affected by disease. They came out of the sheds full of vigor and health; then, at the same moment that they were cheerfully browsing the grass of the meadows, they were attacked with a suffocating cough, a certain prelude of death. They were then seen to turn convulsively on themselves and fall exhausted, among their companions, and soon give up their last breath. Then, a surprising thing; in the spring and in the summer which followed, it became the turn of the various cattle, whom a malignant fever decimated to the point of almost completely destroying them. As a matter of fact, celestial influences are varied in an infinite degree like the events derived from them, and to each one of them is intimately bound a certain order of phenomena.

And on the other hand, what diversity in the morbid germs, what oddity in their effects! You shall judge of them.

The miasms contained in the atmosphere are found in direct contact with the eyes; well, it is not only the eyes that they affect, it is the lung that they will reach in the depths of the chest! In the same manner also we occasionally see the tender grape preserve itself intact next to hardier fruits which die away; and when, in its turn, it dies, either by impoverishment of the seed, or by a swelling or a shrinking of its pores, it is never so except under the influence of causes that are proper to it.

Let us now study the symptoms of this scourge which a celestial influx has caused and reproduced after centuries that it was forgotton. This disease does not affect the dumb inhabitants of the wave, nor the wild beasts of the forests, nor the birds of the sky, nor horses nor cattle. It only has to do with man; man alone is its prey.

In the human body, it is the blood that it attacks at first, and, feeding on naught but fat and viscid humors, it is on the fat and corrupted parts of this fluid that it preferably attaches itself.

Here especially, O muse, I claim thy help to limn the picture of this execrable pestilence. Deign also to inspire me, Apollo, god of the day, god of poetry, and make matters such that my work may, thanks to thee, remain through coming centuries. A day, in fact, may perhaps come when our great grand nephews will take the pleasure of consulting the description of a forgotten disease. Forgotten, yes, for no one doubts at a given time this disease will return into the clouds of nothingness. And no one doubts also but that, after another series of centuries, it will return to the light, to afflict anew the world and once more spread terror among the peoples of another age.

One of the most surprising of facts is that, after having contracted the germ of the contagion, the victim attacked by the scourge does not often present any lesion that is well marked before the moon has four times accomplished its travels. The disease, in fact, does not show itself at once by accusing symptoms directly that it has penetrated the organism. For a certain time it broods in silence, as if it were gathering its forces for a more terrible explosion. During this period, at all events, a strange languor seizes the patient and depresses his whole being; his mind seems heavy, his limbs are soft, and weakening, fail for work; the eye loses its flash and the face is depressed in its expression and has become pale.

It is on the organs of generation that the virus first is transported, to irradiate from there to the neighboring parts and on the regions of the groin.

Soon after, more well defined symptoms show themselves. When the light of day disappears to give place to the shades of night, at the time when the inner heat of living bodies leaves the peripheral parts to concentrate upon the viscera, atrocious pains suddenly burst forth in the limbs charged with vitiated humors and torture the articulations, the arms, the shoulders, the calves. It is because at that moment, vigilant Nature, an enemy of all impurity, is at work to react against the putrid ferments which the disease has introduced into the veins and with which it has penetrated all the humors, all the nourishing juices of the organisms. She strains to drive them away; she energetically fights against them. But they resist; thick, viscid, not displacing themselves except slowly, they fix themselves on the muscles, they attach themselves to the exsanguined framework of the tissues, and give rise to horrible sufferings wherever they adhere.

The most subtle of these morbid humors, those which are the most easily evacuated, take refuge either in the skin or in the extremities of the limbs. They then produce hideous eruptions on those points and these exanthems soon spread over the whole body and cover the face with a repulsive mask.

Unknown up to our days, these eruptions consist of pustules and conical pimples, which, gorged with corrupted liquids, are not slow in opening to allow the escape of a mucous and virulent sanious liquid. Even, sometimes, the pimples that are similar develop in the depths of organs and noiselessly corrode the tissues. It is thus that horrible ulcers are seen covering the limbs, denuding the bones, eating the lips and penetrating the throat, from which there only issues a weak and plaintive voice.

At other times, again, there exhales from the skin thick humors which dry into fearsome crusts on the surface of the integument. Like these are seen the viscid juices which come from the cherry tree or the almond tree condensing in a gummy callus on the bark of these trees.

Ah! how many patients, sorrowful victims of this plague have contemplated with horror their faces and their bodies covered with the hideous taints, deploring their youth destroyed in its bloom, and have cursed the gods and threatened the sky! Unfortunates! Night which pours sweet repose upon all nature, has no more charms for them, for sleep has fled from their eyes. For them, in the same manner, aurora comes without attractions, for day like night recalls their pains. The pleasures of the table, joyous feasts, the intoxicating gifts of Bacchus, the festivities of the city, the delights of the country, nothing smiles for them any more. Vainly do they search for a respite to their sufferings on green banks made pleasant by the purling of streams, in the shade of valleys, and in the solitude of mountains. Desperate, lost, they return addressing ardent prayers to the gods, burning expiatory incense in the temples, loading altars with rich gifts. Useless trouble! The gods remain deaf to their voices and disdain their sacrifices.

O painful recollection! In rich Canomania, which the Olilius renders fertile before uniting its waves with those of the Sabine, there lived a young and rich patrician whom all Ausonia could have envied for his renown and happiness. Strong in the flower of his age, he took pleasure either in mastering the nature of an untrained horse, or in shining in a tourney his helmet on and sword in hand, or contesting for the prizes of a trial in the gymnasium, or in hunting the deer, or in forcing wild beasts back into the depths of forests. His face shone with a divine beauty. All of you, O nymphs of the Olilius and of the Eridan, goddesses of the fields and of the woods, all I say burned for him secret fires and sought his love. And, perhaps, it was one of you, irritated by his indifference, who called upon his head the anger of the gods. Alas! he enjoyed life in full security when the terrible scourge struck him. Ah! never was seen, and never more will the lamentable victim be seen! Flower of youth, the brilliance of health, the vigor of the soul, all these wither in him under the pressure of an unpitying disease. A hideous leprosy invades his entire body; his swollen bones become a prey to caries; his nose is eaten by a malignant ulcer; and, as a limit of affliction, his eyes, so beautiful, the clear mirrors of the day are devoured by a fearsome ulcer! Death finally took pity on him and hastened the end of his torture. Long regrets followed him from the nymphs of the woods and of the fields; the Alps, the Olilius and the Eridan gave their tears, and the Sabine itself gave a muffled groan at the news of his demise.

Such were the evils that Saturn spread upon the earth in those fateful days! And not less enraged against us, Mars afflicted us, at the same time, with a thousand disasters. It seemed as if the Eumarides had been sworn to encompass our ruin, and that from the bottom of the Styx or the depths of Tartarus hell had unchained upon us all the scourges at one time, pestilence, war, famine and death!

O Saturn, father of Latium, O protecting gods of Ausonia, what crimes have your children committed to merit such punishments? Is there any affliction, is there some pain which we have not exhausted? Was there ever a nation more cruelly tried by the vengeance of heaven? I, Parthanope, shall be the first to tell of the disease to which thou has submitted us, the massacre of thy Kings, the ravage of thy states, the captivity of thy people! Shall I also speak of those murderous combats which witnessed the flowing Italian blood mingled with the French? Shall I tell of those days of carnage when the reddened waves of the Tar poured into the Eridan so many spoils of war, so many dead bodies of men and of hair piled about in confusion? Even thou, nymph of Abdua, did not fail to see thy bosom soiled by the blood of ours, and the Eridan could not allay thy pain except by mingling its tears with thine, by uniting its waves with thy desolate billows! And thus, unfortunate Ausonia, thus it is that discord has ruined thy power and has robbed thee of the sceptre of the world, the heritage of thy ancestors. Does there remain in the whole extent of thy empire, does there remain a single shred of ground which has not suffered the outrages of conquest, the insult of the conqueror and the horror of carnage? Answer, ye, banks which the Erethene fecundates before precipitating itself in the Adriatic, mingling its waves with those of the river of the Euganeans, answer calm vineyards, who until then had never known the click of arms or the brawl of combats!

O my fatherland, sacred soil, cradle of the gods, Italy, mother of so many heroes, opulent country which the Adigus and the Benacus fecundate, thou whom the entire world envied formerly for its peaceful prosperity, who today would be able to recite thy own fortunes, to enumerate thy disasters, thy outrages, thy sufferings? Ah, lower thy head, bend thy humiliated face. Benacus, go, thy waves no longer bathe the land of laurels! And, as if so much misfortune, and so many troubles were not enough, here is the limit of affliction, that the hope of Latium, the honor of letters, the loved disciple of Pallas, has been taken from us. Mark Anthony is no more! Jealous death snatched him from the arms of the Muses and struck him in the springtime of his age. He now rests on the rocky banks where the Banacus rolls its murmuring waves. The Nymphs of the Adiga weep for him; for the adjacent groves heard during one night the well beloved voice of Catullus sighing melodious regrets on his tomb. And, at the same time, the armies of the King of France devastated our provinces and subjugated Liguria. The emperor, on the other hand, passed iron and fire over the territory of the Euganeans, ravaging the shores of the Sila and loading with chains the rebellious Frioul; entire Italy was plunged into mourning and desolation!

SYPHILIDIS LIBER SECUNDUS.

I will now, following my work, state here the diet and treatment which are proper to oppose to the disease according to its phases and different forms; I will reveal the marvelous agents which were discovered to combat it.

At the beginning, amid the consternation produced by a disease unknown up to that time, a thousand remedies were tried which were all powerless. But stimulated by the darts of sufferings, otherwise illuminated by his first reverses, man learned how to find new arms against this redoubted enemy; he fought against the scourge, he threw it, he was enabled one day to proclaim himself victor.

I believe, to tell the truth, that divine help was not a stranger to this victory and sustains us at our wish in these cruel trials. For, at the very time when evil doing stars persuade us with their anger, Heaven had for us pitying looks and gave us, in the midst of our misfortunes, days of peaceful prosperity. Our century, without doubt, has undergone misfortunes without number. It has seen the world invaded by a new pestilence; it has seen impious wars overturn empires, and drench our devastated homes with blood, terrible fires consume entire cities, sacreligious cohorts profane sacred temples, terrible famines render desolate the universe, inundations submerge our fields and carry off on their way, men, flocks, crops and forests! But this same country, on the other hand, has viewed the most majestic spectacles that were ever produced in the eternity of ages. It has seen our intrepid fleets conquer the immensity of the seas. We had already discovered the Hesperides, neighbors of Atlas; already we had doubled Presson, under the antarctic pole, explored the precipitous banks of the Raptus and gathered the tributes of Persia and of Arabia. All these conquests, nevertheless, did not suffice for our ambition; we had to push back the limits of the old world. For this purpose our hardy navigators penetrated, beyond the Indies and the Ganges, into those countries which look upon the rise of Aurora and up to Cyambus whose forests give us ebony and macer; for these things, and guided by the gods, our valiant squadron approached a new continent, different from ours both in its peoples and in the splendor of its firmament.

Our century may also honor itself in that sublime poet, who celebrated in his verses the great cycles of the stars, the gardens of the Hesperides and the revolutions of the sky. Parthenope and the Sebethus applauded his divine accents, and the sacred manes of Virgil shook at his voice.

And if thy modesty, illustrious Bembo, forces me to forget thee here, thou and several of our contemporaries whom grateful posterity will place in the same rank as the greatest geniuses of antiquity, how could I not mention, among the glories of this country, the name of the illustrious pontiff whom Rome is proud to obey and of whom Latium is so proud? Under thy auspices, O Leo, the malign influences of the stars have vanished, and Jupiter has not poured upon us any but the propitious fires of his purest rays. It is thou, and thou alone, who, after so many disturbances and storms, hast recalled to us the exiled muses; it is thou who hast returned to Italy both her ancient laws, and her sanctuaries of justice, and her sacred temples. It is thou who, for the defense of Rome, and of our altars, art preparing today a holy crusade; and already, at the mere sound of thy arms, the Euphrates and the Nile shake with terror, the Euxine retreats frightened, and the nymph of the Egean flees all lost to the Doric shore.

But I must leave to other voices the honor of celebrating so many brilliant facts; perhaps noble Bembo, thou deservest for thyself the care of marking for future centuries the memorable history. My muse dares not aspire to such subjects; she has put upon herself a more humble task, whose course she will pursue.

Blood has not the same identical composition in all patients. If it is pure, it is a good presage; if, on the contrary, it is thick, superabundant and charged with bile, the disease, under such conditions will be more serious, more rebellious, and will only give way to the use of more energetic measures, as well as more violent.

That which is the most essential to a cure, is to surprise the disease at its inception, to strangle it in the form of a germ before it has had time to invade the viscera. For when it has penetrated into the organism, when it has taken root and developed its ravages, it is alas! but at the price of rough experience that one can succeed in expelling it. Apply yourself then, before all, to combat it at its very inception, and engrave in your mind the precepts which will follow.

Patients, the quality of the air that you breathe, is far from being an indifferent matter. Learn how to avoid winds from the south; flee from the fogs and from wet grounds with pernicious effluvia. Choose for a stay a laughing country with uncovered horizon or some hill-side bathed by the sun. Only there will you find pure air, continually renewed by the winds and the friendly zephyrs.

Especially guard yourself against laziness and nonchalance. Go, go drive in their dens the bear and the boar; hunt the deer from the crests of mountains to the foot of the valleys and into the depths of the woods.

As a fact, I have often seen the disease clear up by the sweating and cure after long runs in the forests. This is not all. Without false shame, take in hand the plough and turn its share in the bosom of the earth; armed with a hoe tear up the underbrush, strike with an axe the towering oak, uproot the sycamore. Even at home or in the evening, do not remain inactive. May dancing, shuttle-cock and palestra be then for you useful and salutary exercises. No truce for the disease! And, if such labors cause you to often bitterly regret the charms of a sweet repose and the delights of a soft and downy couch, resist, resist with courage! Sleep and repose are your enemies; under the appearance of a deceptive ease, they would do naught but feed and render worse the disease in your bosom.

Drive away far from you the anxieties, pre-occupations, and regrets; far from you the trouble of passions and the assiduity of serious studies! What suits your state is the mild business of the muses, it is joyous couplets, and frolicsome dances. At all events do not succumb to the attractions of love; nothing could be more harmful, and your kisses would taint the tender daughters of Venus with a detestable contagion. Nothing is more important for you than the ordering of your diet and the choice of foods. Upon this point redouble your attention and vigilance. In the first place banish from the table all fish, no matter which they are, fish from rivers or ponds, from fresh or from salt water. At most you may, in case of necessity, indulge in those that are fished near bluffs or falls and whose meat is white, soft and delicate; such are, for example, the phycine, the dorade, the gudgeon, the perch, friend of rocky shores, and the scare, sole ruminant of the waves, the constant guest of the mouths of rivers. Also abstain from aquatic birds which, living along the banks of rivers or in swamps, feed on nothing but fish. In the same manner avoid duck with its flesh charged with fat, goose, which long ago saved the Capital, the full quail, the bacon and entrails of the hog, the loin of boars which have fallen under your blows in your murderous hunts, cold cucumber, provocative truffles, artichokes, onions with the acrid and piquant taste, vinegar and milk.

Do not let yourself be tempted either by the sparkling or frothy wines of the shores of Corsica, of Falernum or of Puini, or those which are produced in our small forms by the grape of Rhetia. Nothing will be less healthful for you than the light wines of the Sabine or those of which the Naiads will have dulled the generous odors. On the other hand, that of which you may freely use, is comprised in all simple foods which are healthful and of which Nature is generous in gardens, and which are the delight to the gods; mint, cress, chicory, hare's lettuce whose flower braves hoar frost, skirret, the friend of small streams, sweet marlum, calamus with perfumed odor, the coquettish melissa, ox-tongue which thrives best on the edges of fountains, packet, spinage, sorrel, samphire with salty buds, hops which interlaces with brush, byronia of which I advise you to gather the young before the adult branch has spoilt the shoots and spread its seeds that are turning green. But I stop, for I cannot mention all. Other cares demand my attention also. O muse, it is time to leave the shade of Aonia to approach the domain of nature. A new career opens before my steps. May I gather there, in default of poetic laurels, the humbler crown of oak leaves, as the prize of my efforts devoted to the saving of so many victims! If the disease occurs in Spring or even in Autumn, if the patient is young, robust, and plethoric, the indication is to open the basilic vein or even the median, in order to free the body of corrupted blood. In addition, no matter what the season, hasten to place purgatives at work; for, this is the most certain means of evacuating peccant humors and morbid ferments. At all events it is proper not to have recourse to them until after due preparation of the channels by resolvents, cutting medicines, and such as delay action.

Now, to work! First of all prepare a decoction in which you will add to the thyme of Crete that of pamphilia so similar to thymber, almost to its hardness, the tops of hops with the undulating stem, fennel, smallage, fumitory, whose leaves simulate the arms of marine pulp, capillaria which remains dry on the bosom of the waters, sterile ceterach, hart's tongue with reddish filiata. Make use of this remedy until all the humors have arrived to a perfect cooking. Then, at that moment seize the favorable occasion to put to use the favorable properties of squills with the acrid taste, of bitter colocynth, of hellebore, sea star whose flowers change color three times daily, ginger, wild cucumber, olibanum, myrrh, bdellium, gum ammoniac, opoponax and hermodactylum. Having done this, if your constitution is delicate or enfeebled and refuses the use of these violent remedies which could assure your liberty in a short time, it is proper to have recourse only to a medication that is more mild and more slowly curative. In such a case here are the remedies to employ to complete the cure and dissipate the last remains of a disease which is ever ready to take on insidious recrudescences.

First of all, on account of their drying and antiseptic properties, resinous substances of all sorts are indicated such as myrrh, olibanum, the resin of cedar, aspalath, cypress with its evergreen foliage, aromatic gallingate, odoriferous cassia, cinnamon with two perfumes, cardamon, mace and aloes wood. It is still scordium, a strong antidote whose powers dissipate the effects of all poisons and of every virus. This valued plant grows in the meadows and on the edges of marshes. You will easily recognize it by its purple flower, its odor of garlic, of its appearance which recalls the common germanger. Go and pluck in the morning, at sunrise, the leaves and the roots to prepare a salutary decoction of which you will have to make use for a long time.

And thou, especially, noble lemon tree, the pride of the Hesperides, precious gift of the Orient, fear not that my muse will forget thee here. Already rendered celebrated by illustrious poets, deign again to accept the homage of a physician. May thy brow be crowned with eternal verdure, may thy thick branches be decorated with perfumed flowers and bend beneath the weight of their golden fruit! Divine tree, which Venus endowed with marvelous powers as a souvenir of her dear Adonis, we hail thee who, in actual trouble, furnishes us the most useful help for our disease.

Another remedy imagined by the industry of man. Look at that glass ball with a tapering neck, with a roundish paunch. There has just been poured in it some water together with a few handfuls of ivy leaves and of dittany, or roots of orris, of perprunum and of elder. In a short time, under the influence of the flame, the liquid comes to a small boil; light vapors are freed and fill the dome of the apparatus; but hardly have they touched its walls cooled by the outer air than they condense in a dew, running on the cap and flowing into the serpentine tube. The liquid obtained by this ingenious distillation possesses marvelous powers to dissolve the last ferments of the disease. It must be taken hot in glassful doses, in the morning while in bed, in such manner as to excite copious sweats. During the course of this treatment, there are at times noted terrific pains which cruelly torture the limbs. Hasten to alleviate them by the use of different topical remedies, such as notably wool-fat, oil of mastic, goose grease, linseed, mucilage, daffodils, elder, honey, saffron of Crete, and dregs of oil.

At other times, it is a malign ulcer which appears in the mouth or throat. Attack it, without loss of time, with verdigris, to kill it in its germ state, before it has spread its ravages. This caustic associated with fats and with dessicants, will be equally useful to employ for the destruction of pustules, to dissolve callosities and cicatrize eating ulcers. But it is in vain, I suppose, that you have exhausted the entire series of these remedies; or, perhaps, impatient of such slowness, relying upon your strength and your health, you resolve to turn to more energetic agents, to end the matter with the hated enemy as soon as possible. Be it so! I will show you these violent and expeditious methods which can triumph, in a short time, over a disease that is usually long in duration, stubborn, subject to relapses and rebellious to mild medication. But also learn the price you will have to pay for your hasty deliverance.

First of all here is a treatment which consists in the use of fumigations composed of styrax, of cinnabar, of minium, of antimony, and of incense. We have here, without doubt, an active medication, which succeeds in cleaning the body of its awful taints; but it is excessively violent, irritating, and uncertain in its results. In addition it brings on respiratory difficulties and a true suffocation. Therefore, these fumigations, in my opinion should never be used on the entire body; it is proper to limit their action to those parts which are the seat of eruptions or of ulcers. Another method of which mercury forms the basis is much preferable. As a fact, the action of mercury on the scourge is marvelous, either because its natural affiinity for heat and cold renders it proper to absorb the devouring fire of the disease; or, because its surprising density permits it to divide and to dissolve the humors for a reason that is analogous to that which gives to incandescent iron a caustic action more marked than that of a light flame; or that its mobile and penetrating molecules, apt to infiltrate themselves in the warp of tissues, have the power of pursuing and consuming even to the bottom of organs the impure yeasts of the disease; or finally that its magic virtues are derived from some occult force whose mystery escapes us. But, I stop, for before all I must here state how that remedy was revealed to man by a divine hand, and celebrate in my verses this good deed of the gods.

In a valley of Syria, shaded by the luxuriant foliage of willows and cut by the murmuring waves of Callirhoe, there formerly lived, it is said, a husbandman named Ilceus. He divided his tranquil life between the labors of his field, and the cultivation of a garden consecrated to the gods of the field in which grew through his care gallingate, the cassia tree, and perfumed ginger. Suddenly, O horrors, he was struck by the terrible scourge. The unfortunate man, in his distress, called the heavens to his aid: "Ye gods that I adore," he cried, "have pity on my torture! And thou, beneficent Callirhoe, thou who always curest our ills, do not forget that but a few days since I made an offering to thee, on the trunk of an oak, of the carcass of the deer that had fallen under my blows. Powerful divinities, if your clemency delivers me from this awful disease which tortures me night and day, my grateful hand will not cease to load your altars with crowns and flowers. From this time on my most pleasing violets and my whitest lilies go to you; to you the budding roses and the first hyacinths of my humble place." He spoke and fell back exhausted on the grass.

At that time Callirhoe was bathing herself in a neighboring grotto. She heard his prayer and those vows. She at once answered Ilceus by the caressing murmur of her limpid waves which flowed upon the moss of the rocks. She then sent him sleep to assuage his pains; and, whilst he was resting in peace beneath the fresh shade of the willows, she appeared to him in a dream, arising from the bosom of the waters, and said:

"Ilceus, at last the gods, in answer to my prayer, have taken pity on thee, but, alas! the remedy, the only remedy, that may cure thee of thy ills, thou shall hunt in vain in this part of the world that the Sun lights with his rays. Such in fact is the inexorable chastisement which has been visited upon thee by Diana and her brother Apollo, the very day that thou didst pierce with thy arrows the sacred deer of whose carcass thou didst make an offering to me. Diana saw thy victim panting upon the ground and bathed in blood; she saw thy fatal trophy suspended on one of the oaks of the neighboring forest; and in her grief she cursed thee! It is she and the son of Latona, excited against thee by the anger of his sister, who have afflicted thee with a horrible disease; and both have sworn that everywhere in which their empire extends thou shalt find no remedy for thy sufferings. There remains for thee, as the only resource, to seek thy safety in the bowels of the earth and the darkness of the infernal regions. Listen! Under a neighboring rock, a dark cavern opens and it reveals to the eyes of mortals a dense forest of oak trees; a horrible chasm, which is terrifying, in which the cedar with plaintive murmurs alone troubles the eternal silence. Let the next sunrise see thee there, immolate a black sheep and offer it to Cybele, burning cypress and thuja in honor of Erebus, of the shades and of the unknown divinities of Tartarus. Thy prayers will be heard, and a nymph will come offering herself to thee as a guide for thy steps in the dark roads which lead to the center of the earth. She herself, will also point out to thee the remedy that thou implorest. Take courage! And do not believe thyself to be deceived, at this time, by the illusion of a dream. Look, recognize me! I am Callirhoe, the Nymph friend, whose waters fecundate the fields which thou dost cultivate." She had spoken and at once plunged in the blue waves.

Ilceus awakes, "intoxicated with joy." "Beneficent goddess," he cries, "I accept thy presage, I will obey thee; I will go, divine virgin, whither thy voice calls me!"

The next day, at the earliest streak of dawn, he proceeded to the cavern. He found its entrance under immense rocks which the tree of Jupiter has covered with its branches. On the threshold of the chasm, he immolates a black sheep which he offers as a sacrifice to powerful Cybele. Then, he burns the thuja and the cypress in honor of Erebus and of the divinities of the dark shores. Suddenly there arises a voice which overthrows the subterranean echoes; it is the sacred voice of the goddess!

The nymphs of the earth who preside over the metals, were occupied at that moment in uniting liquid sulphur with the silvered wave of mercury, a marvelous amalgam which, hardened by the bath, transforms itself into pure gold. All ready, for this divine work, unknown to mortals, and they alloyed a hundred rays of flame and a hundred molecules of burnt air with two hundred germs borrowed either from the bowels of the earth or the bosom of the waters. When the voice of Cybele resounded, seized by a religious alarm, they suspended all their labors, and one of them, detached herself from her companions, and approached at once the entrance to the cavern. It is the nymph Lipara to whom is confided, in the dark empire, the task of purifying by fire, gold, silver and the sacred bitumens. Addressing Ilceus: "I know," she told him, "thy name and thy misfortunes; I know the design that brings thee here. Be without fear. It is not in vain that a goddess beloved by us has promised thee our help. The remedy that thou seekest is here. Come, follow me in these dark paths which lead to our domain; the nymph who is speaking to thee will guide thy footsteps." At these words she crossed the threshold of the cavern. Ilceus followed her without hesitation. What a picture then unrolled itself to his eyes! There were here gaping gulfs, there some subterranean rivers, at other places bottomless abysms filled by eternal night. "We are here," says Lipara, "in the empire of Earth. Several divinities have divided among themselves these darksome places. Under our feet extends the kingdom of Proserpine; on its arches are the sacred springs from which pour the rivers which then roll their thundering waves to the sea.

For us, this is our domain. My sister and I make bronze, silver and gold. It is I who guide through the torn sides of this mountain the threads of sulphur whose beneficent vapor mingles itself with the water of thy sweet friend, Callirhoe." However, they continue their walk in the midst of the darkness, and soon they begin to hear the muffled sounds of the subterranean braziers, the crackling of flames excited by the sulphur and the shaking of the bronze which is slowly boiling. "We now approach," continued the nymph, "where Cybele brings forth those metals which so markedly excite the envy of mortals. A thousand goddesses, daughters of the earth and of night, inhabit these dark homes and there consecrate themselves to tasks without number. The one distributes the waters; others dig the earth to gather the sparse germs of flame and of fire; others, finally compose the metallic alloys, which they subsequently pour into molds or which they harden by tempering. The narrow path which thou seest on our left leads to the arsenals of the Cyclops of Etna, who are incessantly hammering iron on the resounding anvils and whose forges belch far away on the earth whirlwinds of smoke. Finally this other road to the right will lead us to the sacred river whose metallic waves carry quicksilver and will furnish thee the remedy, the only remedy that is good for thy disease."

They then entered the avenue whose arches garnished with tutty are traversed by threads of gold and of sulphur of scintillating reflections. Then they arrive at the banks of a river with silvery waves. "Ilceus," says the nymph, "thou hast finally reached the end of thy troubles. When that sacred stream shall have passed over thy body three times, thou shalt be delivered of thy disease and its impure poison." At these words, she plunges her virgin hands into the river; three times she takes out of it the liquid metal and three times she spreads it on the limbs of Ilceus. O prodigy! It is done! The disease at once disappears, and his hideous covering, on contact with this glowing flood, dissolves and disappears in a moment!

"Now leave," continued Lipara, "go find the day, the pure sky and the fortunate regions that the sun lights. But let thy first care be to offer a sacrifice to Diana, to the gods of these gloomy places and to the goddess who has saved thy days."

She has spoken and resumes the road to the cavern. Ilceus follows her, intoxicated with gratitude and joy; he soon passes the threshold of the darksome empire and sees again the radiant clearness of day.

Renown immediately seized this prodigy, and soon the sublime virtues of mercury were known throughout the universe.

At the beginning, mercury was employed associated with lard; later it was combined with the turpentine of Epirus and with the resin of the majestic birch. Certain physicians today combine it with horse fat or bear's grease, or bdellium and with the juice of cedar, others with myrrh, with male incense, with mibium and with burning sulphur. For my part, I prefer to alloy it with a mixture of black hellebore, orris root, galbanum, asafetida, oil of mastic, and oil of native sulphur.

Patients, a truce to the disgust which may be caused by this remedy! For if it is disgusting, the disease is still more so. Besides, your cure is at this price. So, without hesitation, spread this mixture on your body and cover with it your entire skin, with the exception of the head and of the precordial region. Then, carefully wrap yourself in wool and tow; then get into bed, load yourself with bed covering and thus await until a sweat bathes your limbs with an impure dew. Ten days in succession renew this treatment, for ten entire days you are to undergo this cruel trial whose beneficial effect will not cause you to wait.

As a matter of fact, very soon an infallible presage will announce to you the hour of your freedom. Very soon you will feel the ferments of the disease dissolve themselves in your mouth in a disgusting flow of saliva, and you will see the virus, even the virus, evacuate itself at your feet in rivers of saliva.

If, during the course of this treatment, small ulcers develop in your mouth, have a care to fight them with gargles of milk or by a decoction of pomegranate privet. This treatment being completed, you may then, without fear, recall Bacchus to your table and enjoy in full liberty the generous nectars of Phetia, of Falernum and of Chios.

The disease thus subdued, a last and very simple matter remains for you to carry out in order to complete your victorious work. It is that of purifying your body of the last taints by means of ablutions, for which lavender, marjaram, rosemary, verbena and clary offer you their perfumed odors.

SYPHILIDIS LIBER TERTIUS

O muse, beyond the columns of Hercules a new world claims thee. Listen to those murmuring waves which call thee to distant shores. Go, take thy impulse and celebrate in verses the foreign tree which assuages our pains and places a limit to our affliction. And thou, celestial Urania, put on thy medical purple, show to the peoples of Italy thy brow crowned with the August branches of Guaiac, and relate the wonderful prodigies of which our century is a witness.

Ah! heroic century, may some day an illustrious poet consecrate the accents of his lyre to thee! Let him then narrate this inspired singer of heroes and of glory, how our intrepid fleets set out to conquer another continent beyond the unknown seas! Let him sing of those new worlds recently discovered, their cities, their rivers, their different peoples, their strange customs, their skies bespangled with glittering pleiades! Let him relate those combats, those memorable battles which subjected to our laws a continent until then ignored! Let him especially note for the admiration of future centuries that frail bark which alone, plows with its bold prow the immensity of the seas! Happy the favorite of Apollo who will be able to worthily limn such marvels! My Muse would not dare to aspire to such a brilliant task; more modest, she will do naught but here celebrate a sacred tree; she will recite its virtues, she will recount how it was discovered and how it was imported among us from a distant shore.

Under the ardent fires of Cancer, in the bosom of an immense sea in which the chariot of Phebus plunges at the close of day, an island extends, narrow and long, which the Spanish navigators were the first to land upon and in remembrance of their country they called Hispaniola. This land is sown with gold; but that which makes a greater wealth for it than gold, is the precious tree to which natives of the country have given the name of Guaiac.

Guaiac has a stem that is slender and cylindrical. Its branches which are broadly spread are loaded with a thick foliage that is always green, its fruit consists of small, numerous berries, which are astringent to the taste.

Its wood has the hardness of iron; under heat it exudes a sticky resin; when cut it is agreeably shaded in color; green and shining like laurel just below the bark, it takes on a little deeper the pale gray color of box, and becomes darker up to black near its central portions, in such fashion as to recall the tints of both ebony and of walnut. Suppose that to these different colors red is added, the scarf of Iris would not be more richly streaked.

The natives devote an extreme amount of care to the culture of this tree. They force themselves to multiply it; they cover their highlands and lowlands with it. They cherish it, and they worship it as the equal of a saving god. And it is not without reason, for it alone furnishes a remedy against the implacable scourge which the heavenly ire permanently maintains among them.

This remedy is thus prepared by them: A stout branch is detached from the tree, it is freed of its bark, crushed and scraped; the different fragments thus obtained are first left in water to digest for the length of one day and one night, then it is subjected to the action of fire. Care is taken to manage the cooking of the mixture with economy, in such manner as to avoid a hard ebullition and so as not to lose any part of the scum, a topic that may be usefully employed for ulcers and abscesses. The liquid is evaporated in this manner until reduced to one-half and then carefully recovered. The solid residue is then again taken up with water, shaken up with honey and again cooked with a care that is entirely similar.

Of these two decoctions that are successively made the first is given as a remedy in the dose of two glassfuls daily, of which one is to be taken at the rising of Aurora, and the other at the time that twilight begins to spread its shadows on Olympus. The second comprises the only drink which the national rite and the religious law of the country permit patients to use at their meals. The use of the one and of the other must equal in duration the length of time that it takes a star to go through its course to rejoin the chariot of the Sun.

During the whole course of this treatment, the patients are closely confined in a tightly closed apartment, sheltered from the cold, from air and from the inimical draft of the winds. They limit themselves to the most austere diet, to the most rigid fasting, taking no food, except a quantity such as is indispensable to keep up the functions and preserve life. However, they easily support this diet, thanks to the sacred drinks which sustain them equally like a celestial ambrosia and furnish to their famished bodies the occult principles of resistance and of nutrition. After each dose of the remedy, they take care to lie in bed for two hours, in order to permit the divine nectar to penetrate their organs and to purify them by salutary sweats.

And, Diana, O Prodigy, has not completed her career which the action of the remedy already reveals. It is an act of evil! The pustules dry, the ulcers heal, the pains disappear, and the flower of youth is born again with the return of health.

I will tell how a divine hand pointed out this remedy to the natives of the new world, and how the helpful Destinies imported it among us.

Departed from the shores of Spain in search of another world, an intrepid flotilla sailed on far away seas which are present at the setting of the Sun. Uncertain of their way, they proceeded in a haphazard way on unknown waves. About them crowded innumerable Nereids. Nymphs of those unexplored seas, they had all left their damp homes to come and look upon those winged vessels, which, their sails to the wind, appeared to them to fly upon the deep.

It was night. From the serene vault of the firmament the moon spread its pure rays on the undulated surface of the seas. Raising his suppliant looks to that star, the hero who commanded the fleet, he whom the Destinies had chosen for the grand work which is preparing itself, implored the daughter of Latona in these terms: "O Phebe, queen of night, sovereign of these waves, twice hast thou turned thy silvery crescent to us, twice hast thou filled thy course, and nothing yet offers itself to us but the immensity of the waves. Land flees before us. For our grace, cause some shore to appear at the horizon, and direct us, O, goddess, to those worlds that we seek for so long!"

Diana heard the prayer; she at once came down from the sky, borrows the features of the Nereids Cynothos and Clotho, then, mingling with the group of nymphs that surrounded the fleet, she answered the hero in these words: "Courage, beloved son, courage! The days that will shine shall not be done without land appearing before thine eyes, without a port to shelter thy vessels. But do not stop at the first shore that thou shalt meet. It is further on that the Destinies call thee. Beyond that these seas hold a large island of the name of Ophir; there, only must thou limit thy course and found the capital of thy empire!"

She had spoken, and touched the ship with her hand, which, pushed by favoring winds, lightly passed over the azure of the waves.

The chariot of Phebus had scarcely emerged from the waves when a foggy point appeared at the horizon; it is land! Soon, as a fact, the squadron came in view of a shore, of the shore so long desired. It lands, it salutes this hospitable soil, and returns to heaven a just tribute of actions and of thanks. Then the crew seeks in repose new strength for the fatigues that are to come.

Four days pass thus. A mild breeze arises and fills the sails. The squadron at once puts to sea with enthusiasm. It left behind it the island of Anthylie, which floats at the will of the waves. Hagie, Ammerie, the cursed land of the Cannibals, and Gyana with its green shores, and then it noticed an archipelago which traces above the waters escarped heights. Of the innumerable isles which compose it, there is one that is crowned by luxuriant forests and which pours into the sea a large river whose bed is covered with gold. Pure rivulets cross it, and cool shades make charming a stay. Seduced by so many attractions, the squadron is halted. The sailors landed on this enchanting shore with transports of joy. Their first care was to offer a sacrifice to the gods of this place and to the Genius of the river which enriches the ocean with the riches of its waves. They then prepared their table on the carpet of grass, and, a cup in the hand, celebrated this happy day. Some next went out in search of discoveries, impatient of knowing if this land had inhabitants; others went to contemplate the river with scintillating waves and gather the scales of gold with which its bed is sown.

Innocent guests of this country, birds with red bills, and azure plumage, flew at this moment in the thick shades which bordered the banks. The sailors perceived this winged assemblage; they at once seized their arquebuses, rival arms to the thunder, terrible arms whose secret Vulcan revealed to the Teutons, the day that it pleased him to endow mortals with the bolts of Jupiter. Each one chose and adjusted his victim. It is done, the burning wicks fire the powder, a murderous mixture of sulphur, of nitre and of willow charcoal; the lightning flashes, the shot occurs, the balls whistle in the air, and the ground is covered with dead bodies! The sky at the same moment is lighted up by thousands of fires, lightnings plow the clouds and shakes, by its angry claps, the shore, the forest and even down to the deep caves of the sea. Terrified, those of the birds who have escaped the carnage take refuge upon the heights of the rocks, or ask for refuge from the darkest caves. But one of them, O prodigy, stops upon a pointed peak and offers these sinister prophecies: "Cursed strangers, your sacreligious hand has struck the birds of the Sun. Woe be unto you! Learn from me the punishment with which Apollo will visit your crime. If favorable winds have brought you to the banks of Ophir, which you sought for such a long time, it is only at the price of thousands of disasters and of thousands of diseases that it will be given to you to reach this other world from which you hope to steal its ancient liberty. All the scourges of the earth and of the waves will be let loose upon your heads. War will decimate you; these waves will engulf your squadrons; this shore will be covered with your remains, and very few among you will see the sky of your native land! Europe will refuse you all help, and whilst Discord will turn against you your own arms, this land will bring forth giants to crush you. In fine, an unknown pestilence will spread upon you its noisome, tainted marks, until the day when, suppliants, you will come here and implore pardon for your sacrilege and ask from this forest a remedy for your sufferings!"—He had spoken, and, uttering a terrible whistle, disappeared in the depths of the woods.

Upon hearing this fatal prophecy the Spaniards stood pale with terror and chilled with fear. In order to appease the celestial anger, they hurried to offer expiatory sacrifices to the Sun, to the sacred birds, and to the nymphs of the forest. They implored their pardon; they tried all means to bend by their prayers the gods of Ophir and the Genius of the sacred river.

Nevertheless, men of a race that was unknown suddenly emerged from the adjacent woods. Their body was as black as their hair; their chest was naked; their forehead, as a sign of peace, was bound with foliage. They advance toward the sea; they consider with stupefaction the gigantic sides of the vessels, the clothing and the arms of the soldiers; they do not seem to be able to satisfy their eyes with the spectacle of so many marvels. They humbly prostrate themselves before the Spaniards, whom they take for the gods or messengers of the sky, and presenting to their chief, as an offering, some gold, wheat, honey and fruits, they receive in return clothing, wine and divers presents. The wine especially seemed to surprise and please them to ecstacy just as celestial ambrosia would a mortal admitted to the table of the gods.

Tokens of peace are exchanged, and a reciprocal confidence did not take long to be established. The chiefs of the two nations then advanced to meet one another on the river bank. The king of the natives carried in his belt a light veil bordered with emeralds having green reflections; his right hand is armed with a sharp javelin and his left with the threatening skin of a dragon. The admiral is dressed in a tunic woven with gold, on which sparkle gleaming arms; his head is covered with a bronze casque surmounted by a brilliant plume; upon his shoulders shines a collar of gold; a Toledo blade hangs at his side. One and the other, as a sign of peace, exchange a fraternal embrace. The union between the two people is then complete; it is soon cemented by a reciprocal hospitality, and, be it aboard the Spanish vessels, or on land in the cottages of the natives, feasts and joyous banquets make sacred this happy alliance.

It was then the time when the inhabitants of the distant shores were accustomed to offer their annual sacrifices to the vengeful Sun. The entire population of Ophir, whom the Spaniards joined met for this solemnity in a dark valley which was shaded by a thick crown of woods and was traversed by green streamlets. There, in the center of the assemblage, a numerous group existed, diversely composed of men of all ages and ranks of women, of children and of old people. Horrible spectacle! All the unfortunates who form this group carry upon their visages the marks of suffering; a horrible leprosy soils their body; their flesh is eaten by hideous ulcers!

Notwithstanding, a priest all attired in white advances towards these poor victims. He shakes over their heads a branch of guaiac from which a bright liquid flows, then with his own hand he sacrifices a young bull with a snowwhite coat; he gathers its blood in a sacred dish and pours it upon a shepherd kneeling at the altar. He then addresses a solemn hymn to the Sun, and the entire assemblage responds to his sacred words. Boars, and ewes are then immolated and their entrails, roasted at once, are distributed to those who are present.

The Spaniards gazed upon these strange ceremonies with wonder; they trembled with fear at the sight of the hideous ravages of a disease that was unknown to them. Their leader remained silent for a long time as if in a dream, and then cried out: "Ah, here it is: doubtless, this is the scourge with which the bird of Apollo, threatened us, O eternal gods, pity, pity us!" Then addressing the King of the natives (for already the two peoples had learned to understand one another): "What are" said he, "the religious rites? Who are those unfortunates gathered together in this place? Who is the shepherd upon whom your sacrificer has spread the blood of the victim?"

"Valiant stranger", answered the King, "thou hast witnessed our annual sacrifice in honor of the Sun. Its origin is very ancient. And since thou hast asked to know it, I will satisfy thy wish: I will tell thee what series of misfortunes has struck us, and how this scourge which now desolates us was born in our midst."

"An issue of Atlas, of Atlas our father, whose name no doubt is not unknown to thee, our nation lived for a long time happily and cherished of the sky, as long as it honored the gods and remained faithful to their worship.

But a time came, alas! in which corruption and impiety slipped in among us, in which the sacred altars of our fathers were devoted to contempt. The punishment of such a crime did not take time to come, for from that period dates for us a series of misfortunes which I would be unable to recite. It was, at first, that famous island to which Atlas had given his name, that queen of the seas, Atlantic, that a fearful cataclysm shook to its very foundations, and which threw itself in the bosom of those waves which were formerly subject to its empire. Then the anger of heaven turned itself against our flocks, and we saw disappear to the last young of this giant animal of which nothing has survived among us but a memory. As a result, we have nothing to offer to our gods but the blood of foreign victims, born under a sky which is not ours. Later on yet, the anger of the gods and the vengeance of Apollo unchained upon us the terrible scourge of which thou hast seen the ravages. This disease has spread itself in all our cities, and very few among us escape its cruel attacks. It is for the purpose of conjuring him and to propitiate him that our fathers established these expiatory sacrifices, of whose origin it remains for me to tell thee".

According to an ancient tradition, even here, on the banks of this river, a shepherd of the name of Syphilus watched innumerable flocks of King Alcithous. It was the period of the Solstice, and Sirius threw the fire of his rays on these fields. A torrid heat burned the earth; the forests had no shade, the breeze was no longer cool. Syphilus saw his animals dying; seized with indignation, exasperated by his own sufferings, he threw to Sirius a threatening look and thus addressed the god: 'What! we honor thee as the father and the creator of all things, we erect to thee altars, we offer to thee our incense, we sacrifice to thee victims without number, and this is our reward, this is the care that thou takest of the flocks of my King! Ah! it is jealousy without doubt that is devouring thee! Thou who hast in the heavens, it is said but one bull, but one ram, with a hectic dog to watch this great drove, thou hast not borne in view without envy our thousands of cattle, our thousands of sheep with the white fleece. Fool that I am. It is not to thee, it is to Alcithous that I should render divine honors. If that great King commands so many peoples, if so many seas obey his laws, it is because, most assuredly, his power is greater than thine and that of all the other gods. He, at least, will know how to guard our flocks, to give them cool shelter, and to furnish them with green shades'".

"He had spoken, and without waiting he erected an altar on the neighboring mountain; he then rendered divine honors to Alcithous. Shepherds and plowmen soon follow this impious example; and incense no longer smokes, the blood of victims is no longer poured out in honor of the new god".

Alcithous received these homages with intoxication. From the top of his throne, in the midst of his assembled peoples, he proclaimed himself the sovereign of the world; he decreed that in future, to him alone were divine honors to be rendered. 'Let the gods', said he, 'divide the heavens among them; they have nothing to look after among the things here below!' "

"But Sirius, whom nothing escapes, Sirius who with one look embraces the universe, could not see without indignation such sacrileges. In his anger, he charges his rays with pestilential poisons and virulent miasms, which simultaneously infect the air, the earth and the waters. At once upon this criminal earth there arises an unknown plague. Syphilus is the first attacked by it, on account of having been the first to profane the sacred altars. A hideous leprosy covers his body; fearful pains torture his limbs and banish sleep from his eyes. Then, this terrible disease—known since then among us by the name of Syphilis—does not take long to spread in our entire nation, not even sparing our King himself".

"Our fathers then, in their alarm, ran to ask the nymph America, who gives the sacred oracles in the woods of Carthese. They ask her the cause of the disease which is afflicting them; they implore of her a remedy for their sufferings".

" 'Impious mortals', answers the nymph, 'you have had the presumption to equal yourselves to the gods, and today you suffer the punishment of your crime. Go, go without loss of time, to implore your pardon of the god whom you have offended; re-erect those altars and offer to him those sacrifices which are his due. Perhaps you may, in this manner, appease his anger. But do not hope to see the end of the scourge that is afflicting you. This disease shall be eternal, and whosoever shall be born on this earth will suffer from its attacks;

Apollo has sworn it by the Styx and by immutable Destiny. Here at all events, is how you may obtain relief to your sufferings. Choose in your flocks a white heifer and a black one; sacrifice the first to Juno and the second to Cybele. Juno will scatter in the air propitious germs which, received and fecundated in the bosom of Cybele, produce a tree with green branches. That tree is your savior'".

"Thus spoke the nymph, whose voice shook the cave and the neighboring wood. A chill of terror occurred at this sinister prophecy. Nevertheless, the commands of the nymph were obeyed; the altars were reerected; two heifers were sacrificed, the white one and the other black, in honor of Juno and of Cybele".

"Then suddenly, O unheard prodigy and true prodigy (I attest for it the gods and the names of our fathers), an unknown tree arises from the bosom of the earth, spreads its branches and develops its luxuriant crown of foliage. It is from the fruitful trunk of this tree that the neighboring forest was born".

"Our high priest at once prescribes new sacrifices in honor of Apollo. He insists upon an expiatory victim, and fate chooses Syphilus to pay with his life for the crime of the nation".

"The sacrifice is being prepared. Already the ribbons and the sacred cakes are deposited on the altar; already the iron threatens the breast of the victim, when all at once Juno and Sirius, whose anger has been appeased, substitute for the shepherd Syphilus a young bull who receives the fatal blow and alone pays with the price of his blood the outrage done to the gods".

"It is to preserve the memory of these memorable events that our fathers instituted the religious rites which you have just witnessed and which are renewed each year among us. A fictitious victim, this shepherd whom you see at the foot of the altar recalls to us the sacrilege of Syphilus. These unfortunates are those of our people whom the anger of the gods has struck and who cruelly expiate the faults of our father. Our high priest tries to call down on them the pity of heaven and appease the anger of Apollo by his prayers. Purified by these pious sacrifices, they soon regain their homes, loaded with the sacred branches which are to deliver them from this horrible disease".

In this manner mutual relations were thus completed, cementing the union of these two peoples, formerly strangers to one another, when suddenly a gruesome rumor spread, brought by ships of the squadron which came back from the old world after having twice crossed the immensity of the seas. O pain, O cruel and impenetrable destiny! The scourge which desolates Ophir, has, it is said, just burst forth in Europe.

It rages there with fury, sowing fear everywhere and no remedy can prevent its ravages. This is not all! Here soon the same disease is developed aboard of the fleet. Numbers of sailors are attacked by it and see their bodies covered with hideous taints.

In their affliction, the Spaniards recalling the ill-omened oracle of the bird of Apollo, predicting to them that the day would come when they would implore for their pardon and their safety the forest made bloody by their arms. Without more hesitation, they offered a sacrifice to the Sun and to the Nymphs of that country. Then they went to pluck in the forest branches of the sacred wood, and prepared, according to the native rite, the salutary brew which is to purify them. Thinking of the distress of their companions, they load their ships with similar branches, in the hope that this precious remedy will preserve its qualities under a foreign sky. They finally leave. Propitious winds fill their sails; Apollo himself directs their course.

Divine guaiac, it was Spain that had the happiness of first receiving on our continent and of being the first to know thy marvelous virtues. Later the Gauls and the Germans, Scythia and Latium implored thy help. Salutations to thee, savior tree with the luxuriant trunk, with the generous sap! We salute thee, the pride of the New World! Ah! what would have been thy glory, if propitious Destinies had caused thee to be born in this land, the natal place of poets and of the gods! A stranger among us, mayest thou at least owe some part of thy honors to these verses as honors which are thy due! Without doubt my Muse does not dare to aspire to spread the noise of thy marvels from the confines of Bactria to the ice-bergs of the pole or to the burning sands of Ethiopia; but she will at least publish thy sublime virtues among the peoples of Latium, in the fields of the Adigos and on the flowery banks of the Benacus; perhaps even it will carry thy name to the ears of Bembo, on the banks of the Tiber, and this will be for her the dearest reward for her labors.