

Extracts from an old treatise of surgery / [By Felix Würtz] Shewing the successful application of fungous substances in stopping violent bleedings, so long ago as one hundred and sixty years and upwards. With the ingenious conjecture of Mr. Morand about the manner in which these substances act.

Contributors

Mason, H.

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EXTRACTS

FROM AN

Old Treatise of SURGERY.

SHEWING

The SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION
of FUNGOUS SUBSTANCES
in STOPPING VIOLENT BLEEDINGS,
so long ago as *One Hundred and Sixty*
Years and upwards.

WITH

The INGENIOUS CONJECTURE
of Mr. MORAND about the Manner
in which these Substances act.

By H. MASON, SURGEON.

*Il n'est pas impossible qu'il ait été indiqué dans quelques
ouvrages & qu'on l'ait négligé.*

MORAND *Mem. de Chirurgie.*

L O N D O N :

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EXTRACTS

FROM AN

Old Treatise of SURGERY.



LATE Complaint of one of the most eminent Surgeons in *Europe*, reminded me of an old Writer, who among other Parts of surgery, has treated largely and practically upon the Diseases of the Joints, particularly *de Genuum morbis*) and upon which subject having again read him over, was inclined from *Heister's*

A 2

great

great Character of the Author *, to inquire into the Rest of his Practice ; and found him in Variety of Places recommending and actually applying pieces of a prepared fungous substance to stop blood, particularly in a very remarkable Case of a large Head-wound, where there was a Loss of Bone, and great Effusion of Blood.

IN Chap. IV. P. 14, where he is exclaiming against Abuses committed in Blood-stenching, with Corrosives, Irons and the like, “ To prevent the Abuses in my Judgment, says he, there is nothing better to be used in Blood-stenching than Quilts, Lints, or *Mul*
puy

* The Title of the Book I mean, is, *An Experimental Treatise of Surgery*, by FELIX WURTS Surgeon, at *Basell*, in *Germany*; translated from the 27th *German* Edition into *English*, in 1691. But there being a Case in him (which I have inserted at the End of this Pamphlet) dated 1590, that proves it to have been a Practice, at least, so long ago as been mentioned in the Title Page.

puffs *, Cotton Wool, or the like: " And in P. 73. in his Examples of Cures of Head Wounds; " I have, saith he, had Occasion to dress one by Night, in all haste, because he bled so much that I was afraid he would die under my Hands, before I could dress him; for from his Scull was cut off a great Part, Hair, Skin, Bone and all, clean away: And then on the left Side by the Temple, a great Piece was cut off, Skin, Bone, and all was gone. This Wound looked so ghastly, that I was amazed at it, for it bled so vehemently, and it was so great, that I could not cover it with my Hand. I dressed it in Haste, thus: I covered the Wound with Mullipuff, and bound it with broad swathing Bands, and did no more to it, for I thought no other but the Patient would die under my Hands. The next Day taking off the uppermost Roller

* This is the Apellation used by the *English* Translator for the *Lupi Crepitus*, and is in some Parts of *England* called *Mullipuff*, in others *Puff-Ball*, &c. See *Dale's Pharmalog.* p. 63. col. 1.

Roller, there I found the Mullipuff stick close to the Wound, which I let alone, and the Day after that took no more away than what came easily off. Here we are to observe, to the greater Credit of the Application, that the Means of a Counter-pressure was wanting, the Bone we are told, being gone. There was no Return of the Hæmorrhage, so that it is needless to pursue the Circumstances of the Cure any further, this being sufficient to prove the Effect of this fungous Substance: The Patient after many Days did well.

Chap. IV. P. 319. Going on with the Subject of Blood-stenching in Wounds, and in the Nostrils, and how things thereunto must be used and prepared, he gives this Direction.

“ Take Mullipuff, cut great and small Pieces of it, of a finger's Thickness, or thicker, some as big as an Egg, and of a finger's Length, shorter and longer of all

all Sorts; tie these several Pieces in a Paper as hard as you can, then bind them harder together with a Tape, so that one Piece which was the Bigness of an Egg in the Binding be no bigger than the little Finger, this being done press it together with heavy Weights or skrew it in a Press, where you must let it lay for some Days, that they may be yet closer prest together, and keep them for use.

Now when you have any Patient whose Blood you are to stench, take a Piece of the prepared Mullipuff, apply it to the Wound; the Bigness of the Mullipuff must be answerable to the Wound, yet so that it easily goes into the Wound, therefore ought you to be provided with all Sorts of such Pieces: Then another broad and thin Piece must be laid on the Wound and hold it a little with your Hand; when the Mullipuff is laid into the Wound it goeth asunder, swelleth

swelleth to the Bigness it was at first of,
 stoppeth the Wound thereby, and that
 Swelling is gentle not forcible, without
 any Danger to the Wound. Again, he
 says, it is not always needful, that such
Earnest be used in Blood stenchings, nei-
 ther is it necessary to use such prest
 Mullipuffs : Understand it only of such
 Wounds which bleed extremely, where
 no ordinary means will prevail. This is
 a plain Proof that it was no inconfi-
 derable Remedy with him, since he
 recommends it as a sure Refuge when
 other Methods have failed ; *in Wounds*
which bleed extremely, are his Words.
 In another Place he says, “ the Mullipuffs
 may be used *per se*, but you must use a
 good deal of it ; apply it loose to the Wound,
 and then keep it on with a Plaister.
 Many do use it so, and they do well
 therein. I made use of this Way of Blood-
 stenching hitherto, and was ready to
 impart faithfully the same unto others,
 not doubting but you will have good
 Success ;

Success; only let me intreat you, not to use any Corrosives, that are burning and biting." Where he also speaks of a Bleeding at the Nose; he says, "it is not always good to have that Bleeding strenched presently; especially in Cephalic Diseases, because thereby other Diseases are spent and consume away by that Bleeding; but if that Bleeding be so violent, that it must needs be strenched, then proceed thus;

Take instead of Cotton Wool, a little Piece of the soft dried and prest Mullipuff, pull a Needle and strong twisted Thread thro' it, with a great Knot on the End of it; the Mullipuff must be of that Bigness that it may just go in at the Nostrils, put it up with an Instrument into the Nostril, to the Hole which goeth down to the Throat, if you do not so, you will do but little good, for fear the Blood should take its Course into the Throat, therefore the

B

Mulli-

Mullipuff must be straight thrust upward, being it is soft, and causeth no pain."

Have a Care that the Thread stuck thro' the Mullipuff, hang a good deal out of the Nose, that you may pull it out when you have Need. Though this my Process, says he, seemeth mean and poor, yet I found it still to be best and most useful."

As there is a Translation of this old Author into *French*, it is not unlikely *Monf. Brossard* took the Hint from him, of using and extending the Application of these Kind of Substances to those great and fortunate Instances he has done; an Event which must procure him the greatest Praise, as it is substituting a very tender, in the Room of a very painful Method, and which Humanity could only have wished, but not have expected. *Wurtz* does not seem to have had a Thought
of

of trusting it upon such important Occasions, and notwithstanding there is no Case of an Amputation in his Surgery, yet we may easily guess what Steps he would have taken to secure the Vessels: Because in the Chapter where he treats of Abuses committed in Blood-stenching, &c. he says, " I do not wholly condemn hot Irons to stench Blood withal, and hold it to be of very good Use sometimes, as at the off cutting of a Member at the thickest Part of the Thigh, and in two or three Places more."

It would be unfair to conceal that, among his general Instructions, he sometimes orders a Powder prepared of Sheep's Blood to be strewed over the Wound, and to apply the Mullipuff upon that. Likewise, that in another Place he directs the Mullipuff to be dip'd in a Solution of Vitriol before its put up the Nose. However, I do not think the Merit of the Fungus in the least affected by it, as the one

looks trifling, and as he not only warmly condemns again and again the use of Corrosives ; but tells us, it will do *per se* “ many do use it so, and they do well therein ; ” and has effectually made it appear : Besides the many fair Examples recorded by the celebrated *Morand*, in that excellent Work the *Mem. de l'Academ. de Chirurgie*, together with those Facts we have been obliged with at Home, leave no Room to doubt about the Power these Substances have, to stop Blood. I say, *Substances*, because there are other Fungi besides the Agaric of the Oak, which are equally endowed with the same Property. For in the same Memoirs we find that the Powder of the Lycoperdon, or Lupi Crepitus, supported by Bits of the spongy Part of the same Fungus have been found upon Trial to have the same Efficacy with the Fungus of the Oak ; which Experiments are to be found in a periodical Work, intitled, the *Journal Oeconomique*, for the Months of *April* and *June*,

June, 1752. I am told the Fungus growing upon the Outside of Casks in old Wine Vaults, is used by some to restrain the Hæmorrhages of the lesser Blood-Vessels.

Monf. *Morand's* Conjecture relating to the Manner in which these Kind of Substances act, I cannot help mentioning, as it appears both so ingenious and rational; and that I may not divest it of any Part of its Beauty, will give it in his own Words.

“ Je pense (dit il) que sa substance presente a l'orifice du vaisseau ouvert un tissu spongieux, tres fin, capable de ressort que la partie fercuse du caillot est attirée par ce topique, que par ce moyen la portion du caillot qui occupe l'axe de vaisseau se soude plus vite aux parois de la playe, et que les fibres qui tendent naturellement a se reserrer se reserrnet effectivement plutot, y trouvant moins d'obstacle de la part du fluide.”

Monf.

Monf. *Faget*'s Opinion is, that it acts solely as an Astringent, by constricting the Mouths of the Vessels, and coagulating the Blood. Mr. *Morand* is inclined to think it has not any Character of a Styptick (n'a aucun caractere de Stiptique.

I procured a Piece of Fungus (from an Oak) which had a good deal of Moisture in it, and from which I squeezed several Drops into the hollow of my Hand, and upon tasting it, did not find the least Astringency it had.

But whether it acts by binding the serous and grumous Parts of the Blood together, and constringing the Vessel, or rather in Mr. *Morand*'s Way, serves as a Strainer upon the Blood at the Mouth of the Vessel, by which the *Caillot* or Plug is left in a State to unite with it much quicker, as well as more Room being given for the Vessel (the Plug being drained of

its

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its thinner Part) by its natural contractile Power to shut itself up still closer and sooner, there is not much occasion to be solicitous about, so long as we find it to succeed. Tho' taken in this last Way, is it in Effect a Coagulator, but not in Mr. *Faget's* Sense.

To avoid Miscarriages from its Application, perhaps it might be better in the larger Amputations to apply bigger Pieces to the principal Vessels, or wholly to cover the muscular Part of the Wound with one Piece properly supported, as less Pieces are more liable to be displaced by an increased impulse of the Blood, and other Causes, and absorb less, granting Mr. *Morand's* Supposition. Likewise by covering the whole Wound with one Piece some of the muscular Arteries which did not shew themselves, and were left uncovered at the Operation, would not have that Chance to give Trouble after, and especially where the circular Roller is laid
on

on too tight ; which its well known has sometimes caused After-hæmorrhages, where the Ligature has been used *only* to the great Vessels after Amputations, and which have immediately ceased upon removing the too great circular Pressure, upon the returning Vessels. For a more satisfactory Account upon this Head, see the ingenious Mr. *Monroe's* Remarks upon the Amputation of the Extremities.

For an Amusement I took a four Ounce-Gallipot, which I held in a Vessel of warm Water under a Patient's Arm while bleeding, and half filled it with Blood, and into which I dropped a Piece of the prepared Fungus of the Oak (from *Hamburg*) it absorbed so very quick, that it sunk instantly and was out of Sight, I continued the Gallipot in the Water blood-warm, some time longer ; then let it stand by covered a whole Night. I next Morning turned out the Cake of Blood, with its Bottom upwards, took out the
Piece

Piece of Fungus, carefully wiped away the Blood adhering strongly to its Outside, and squeez'd it quite dry between my Fingers into a clean Glafs, in which it stood many Hours, and found it to be near three Parts serum, with a little loose Grume at Bottom.

I after that made a Trial in the same Way with a Bit of a common Fungus I took out of a Field; which I sliced and dried without any other Preparation, this did not absorb near so quick, and the Absorption was a light red Serum, without letting fall any Coagulum; this had not been hammer'd, and the Slowness and Fineness of its Absorption might be owing to its Pores being closer upon that Account. What these Trials prove, or whether they prove any thing at all in Favour of the foregoing Doctrine, I leave to the Determination of others.

The following Description of both the
 Agaric of the Oak and *Licoperdon vel*
 C *Lupi*

Lupi Crepitus is taken out of Gerard's General History of Plants, in fol. enlarged by Johnson, where there are some curious Figures and Descriptions of most of the Species of Fungi, particularly the *Tubera terræ*.

He says, that the Fungus or Toad-stool which grows upon the Trunk or Bodies of old Oaks, very much resembling Auricula Judæ or Jews-Ear, do in Continuance of Time, grow unto the Substance of Wood, which the Fowlers do call Touch-wood, and are for the most Part half circuled or half rounded, whose upper Part is somewhat plain, and sometimes a little hollow, but the lower Part is plaited or pursed; this Kind of Mushroom the Grecians do call *αγχειραι*, and is full of Venom or Poison, especially those which grow upon the Ilex, Olive, and Oak Trees.

The *Fungus Orbicularis vel Lupi Crepitus*, in Form, he says, is very round

round, sticking and cleaving unto the Ground, without any Stalk or Stem, at the first white, but afterwards of a duskyish Colour, which being trodden upon, do breath forth a most thin and fine Powder like unto Smoke. In diverse Parts of *England*, where People dwell far from Neighbours, they carry them kindled with Fire, which lasteth long, whereupon they were called *Lucernarum Fungi*."

Most of the Botanical Writers of any Eminence take Notice of the external Use of the last mentioned Fungus in stopping Blood.

Our ingenious Countryman Mr. *Ray*, under his Account of the Fungi, describes it, "Fungus cucurbitiformis magnitudine
" capitis humani & ponderosus candidus-
" que instar nivis. — Hæc substantia
" vulneribus ubi ficcata fuit, imponi so-
" let pro sanguinis fluxu cohibendo."

In another *English* Botanical Writer, I find this said of it, "Pledgets may be made of the Balls, which must be tied round with Thread, and then pressed hard together, in a screw Press, letting it lye for some Days, this when it comes to be imposed upon a Wound it again dilates itself, and puts a Stop to the Hæmorrhage or Flux of Blood. Then this there is scarcely any thing to be named which can more powerfully and certainly do it, so it will likewise subsist and stick fast to the Vessels." This Account of its Use and Preparation seems to have been taken from *Wurtz*.

Schroder in his *Pharmac.* calls it, *Fungus Chirurgorum*, and says, *hujus frustum imponunt sectæ venæ ad sistendum sanguinem vulnusque consolidandum.*

Clusius speaking of the *Lycoperdon*, has the following Words, *ad compescendas sanguinis effusiones etiam periculossimas commendatur ; in quem usum tonsores ea adser-*
vare

vare multis in Germaniæ locis observavi.
Baubinus in his *Historia Plantarum*,
 likewise gives much the same Account
 of it. *Boerhaave* speaking of the Pow-
 der sometimes found in this Fungus,
 affirms it is, *summum Remedium contra*
Hæmorrhagiam.

The celebrated *Heister* in his *In-*
stitution. Chirurg. under Ch. 2. *De*
sanguinis profusione, says, “ recentioribus
 “ nonnullis in usu tanquam, egregium
 “ hic remedium est fungus ille, quem
 “ *Lycoperdon*, vulgo *Lupi Crepitum* vel
 “ *Bovist* appellant. Hoc probe implen-
 “ dum vulnus est, super impositis sponiis
 “ & fasciis aliquanto arctioribus.”

There remaining another particular
 Case in *Wurtz* (and a scarce Book)
 of the *Menses per vulnus expulsi*, and be-
 ing so circumstantially told, shall be ex-
 cused if I relate it, tho’ foreign to the
 purpose, as it may not be unuseful to
 some in Practice.

Anno

Anno 1590. “ Not far from *Bazell*
 “ an honest Gentlewoman was cutting a
 “ Stick one Time with a sharp Knife,
 “ but the Stick breaking, she cut her Hand
 “ near the Joint very badly, a Surgeon
 “ being sent for, that Cure went on well
 “ unto Healing for twenty Days toge-
 “ ther: One Night a Humour run out
 “ of the Wound, like waterish Blood,
 “ causing smarting Pains; a Physician
 “ and two other Surgeons being called,
 “ counted it a joint Water; she had no
 “ Rest Day nor Night, and that conti-
 “ nued a whole Week, then the Humour
 “ stayed, and the Party had some Ease, but
 “ the Humour had corroded all that was
 “ healed for twenty Days past; her whole
 “ Arm was much swelled and inflamed,
 “ and with Difficulty brought to the State
 “ it was in, in fourteen Days. But four
 “ Weeks after the said Humour fell again
 “ into that Wound, causing as much
 “ Pain as before; Physicians knew not
 “ what to do. At that Time I went to
 “ to

“ to dress a Gentleman’s Child in the
 “ Neighbourhood, and they sent for
 “ me, I beheld and viewed the Wound,
 “ and found that that Humour was no
 “ joint Water ; I presently asked the
 “ Gentlewoman about her Menses. She
 “ replied, she had not them since she was
 “ wounded : Then I perceived what
 “ Humour that was. I proceeded thus :
 “ first of all, I opened on her Foot, the
 “ Saphœna, and with a Pessary of Hel-
 “ lebore Niger, the Humour was brought
 “ to its natural Channel ; she found Ease
 “ presently, all her Pains were gone, and
 “ she was very well cured.”

For more extraordinary Histories of
 this Kind, see, *Schenkii Observationum
 Medicarum, rararum et admirabilium*,
 under the Chapter *de Mensibus suppressis &
 alienis locis fluentibus*.

" to find a German's Child in the
" Neighbourhood, and they sent for
" me, I looked and viewed the Wound,
" and found that the Child was no
" John Water. I presently asked the
" Castlewoman about her Mother. She
" replied, she had not seen since she was
" wounded: Then I perceived what
" I thought that was. I proceeded thus:
" At last of all, I opened on her foot, the
" sapient, and with a cutting of the
" laborer, the blood was brought
" to the surface of the foot, and
" the blood was well cured.
" For more extensive diseases of
" the kind, see, however, Ophthalms
" which may, however, be cured.
" For the Cure of the same, see
" the following.