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THE EVOLUTION OF THE TREPANNING INSTRUMENT.



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THE EVOLUTION OF THE TREPAN.

THE origin of trepanning goes back to the Neolithic period, when the primitive medicine man scraped holes in the skull of his patient with a sharp flint to allow the demons of disease to escape from the body. Instruments of obsidian, stone, shell, and sharks' teeth were also probably used for this purpose, and are still employed by primitive peoples in many parts of the world.

In early times epilepsy and insanity, both of which were supposed to be due to demoniacal possession, were treated by trepanning to allow the obnoxious intruder to escape, and this treatment survived until 1623.

In New Ireland and many of the islands of the South Seas trepanning is commonly resorted to by the natives in the treatment of blows or wounds on the head.

Hippocrates (460 B.C.) describes an instrument used for trepanning with a circular motion, and both Galen and Paul of Aegina allude to the practice as being known to the early Greeks.

The Romans used a bow-drill described by Celsus, and a bronze instrument of this kind together with other Roman surgical instruments was excavated at Kolophon, Asia Minor, in 1913.

In the XI century, Albucasis describes a drill for trepanning with a triangular iron point and a conical wooden handle.

Brunschwig, in the XV century, alludes to a trepanning instrument "sharpened at the end like a bote which broadens upwards."

The instrument described by Amboise Paré, as used in the XVI century, was worked by both hands with a circular movement and had a centre bit, or bote, similar to the tool of the carpenter.

In the XVI century the bow-drill was still used by some surgeons, and was depicted by Cressé in 1562. This was succeeded by the crown or cylindrical saw with fine teeth.

Early in the XVIII century an improved form of instrument was introduced called the trephine. In the trephine the handle is placed transversely and it has a cylindrical saw with a small steel point or centre pin, which may be worked either way with one hand.

1. OBSIDIAN, used by prehistoric man for trepanning.
2. SHARK'S TOOTH, used by primitive man for trepanning.
3. BRONZE BOW-DRILL, used by the Romans in trepanning.
4. TREPANNING SAW, used by Arab Tribes, North Africa.
5. TREPANNING INSTRUMENT, XVI century.
6. TREPANNING INSTRUMENT, XVII century.
7. AN IMPROVED TREPANNING INSTRUMENT, with rotary movement, XVIII century. Suggested by Charité.
8. A TREPINE, XVIII century.