

# Texts and Documents

## HISTORY OF SURGERY AND INTRODUCTION TO SURGICAL LECTURES, BY MONRO PRIMUS

by

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THE Library of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh contains a set of fifty-eight volumes of notes on medical subjects taken from lectures delivered in the mid-1730s: they are neatly written in one hand throughout, and red ink is used for proper names, certain important words, and headings. It is obvious that they were not written in this form during lectures, but were evidently transcribed, possibly not by the person who took the original notes. The lectures were given by Professors Monro, Alston, Rutherford, St. Clair, and Plummer in Edinburgh, and by Boerhaave, Albinus, and van Swieten in Leyden. All are in Latin except those by Alston (on *Materia Medica* and Botany), and those by Monro *Primus*. This set of notes, together with some other volumes of Edinburgh lecture notes, was purchased in London in 1772 by Dr. Andrew Duncan *Senior*, and presented by him to the College.

Of the twelve volumes of lectures by Monro in this set, seven are devoted to surgery, for although it was not until 1777 that Professor Monro *Secundus* had the word 'Surgery' officially added to his title, this subject was in fact considered part of the Chair of Anatomy from the time of the appointment of Monro *Primus* in 1720: and the unreasonable attempts by Monro *Tertius* to retain this prerogative were to cause much trouble in the early nineteenth century. The surgical lectures commence with the introduction and history of surgery which follows: this I believe reveals the true character of Monro *Primus* as a well-read and cultured man with a very broad view of his subject. As the aim is to give an impression of the lectures as Monro delivered them, the student's notes being only a means to this end, I have not hesitated to make certain alterations to the script: I have rectified a few obvious slips of the pen, added certain essential punctuation, and corrected the quotations from Pope. Otherwise however the spellings remain as written.

Medicine is Commonly Divided into five parts:

1<sup>st</sup> ΦΥΣΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ or an extract Knowledge of y<sup>e</sup> humane Bodys.

2<sup>d</sup> ΜΑΘΟΛΟΓΙΑ or history of Diseases.

3<sup>d</sup> ΣΗΜΕΙΩΤΙΚΗ or Signs of Diseases.

4<sup>th</sup> ΥΓΙΕΙΝΗ or Means of preserving Health.

These must be understood and acquainted with before we can pretend to venture on the

5<sup>th</sup> ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΤΙΚΗ or y<sup>e</sup> Method of Curing and healing Diseases which is performed by ΔΙΕΤΗΤΙΚΗ or ordering a right Diet; by Pharmacy or prescription of Medicines; and by Surgery or Manuall Operations: this last is y<sup>e</sup> province that falls to my Share, which would appear to be of as long Standing if not more Antient then any part of Medecine for wee see by y<sup>e</sup> Antidiluvian History that very soon after the Creation Fends, Animosities & Envies possessed the hearts of Men hence Rapines Murders and petty Wars Ensued by which the Parties might have been expos'd to externall Injuries, for which Nature prompts people to seek

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and apply a Remedy, that is Surgery tho' perhaps very unperfect must then have been in Exercise whilst otherwise the Inhabitants of y<sup>e</sup> Earth lived so temperately in such a moderate Climate and Serene Air that they arrived to these prodigious Ages of which y<sup>e</sup> Scripture gives an Account. Some of them lived to [blank] Without being obnoxious to those Diseses which this Day so effect Mankind.

Very soon after the Flood we find y<sup>e</sup> different Nations that were Necessary formed by y<sup>e</sup> Confusion of Tongues at Babel Differing in their Interests, Jarring with their Neighbours and calling in all the Assistance they can get or power they can make to oppose one another, then forming Numerous Armies and fighting pitched Battles, and certainly there must have been people apply'd to take Care of those people that Suffered in these Battles. So far it is probable y<sup>t</sup> Surgery was exercised in these earliest Times, But since we have no account of particular persons who apply'd themselves to this Art Let us examine what we can learn of Such from y<sup>e</sup> heathen History & Fables. *Chiron* y<sup>e</sup> Centaur seems to be y<sup>e</sup> first taken Notice of tho' his Scholar *Eusculapius* Son of Apollo who is said to have lived a little time before y<sup>e</sup> Trojan War was most renowned and for his great Skill Deified and is to this Day commonly known as y<sup>e</sup> patron of Medecine. Next we come to those who are employd in y<sup>e</sup> Trojan Warr, the two famous were *Machaon* & *Podalerious* Sons of Eusculapius. As Homer speaks of them,

To these his skill their parent-god imparts,  
Divine professors of the healing arts. (Popes Translation Iliad 2<sup>d</sup> P: 890)

A specimen of Machaons practice we see Iliad: the 4<sup>th</sup> when he was Called to Menelaus being Wounded, after Drawing y<sup>e</sup> Arrow,

He suck'd the blood, and sov'reign balm infus'd,  
Which Chiron gave, and Æsculapius us'd. (Pope 250.)

We may here observe that several other Princes and Heroes were acquainted with and practised Surgery: *Achillis* the Hero of the Poem was Chirons Pupill as in Iliad XI Euripelus being Wounded Desires *Patroclus's* Assistance begging of him to apply Some Balsam,

Such as sage Chiron sire of pharmacy,  
Once taught Achilles, and Achilles thee.

His Intimate dear Friend *Patroclus* likewise performed Chirurgical Operations and applied Dressings, as in y<sup>e</sup> same Iliad, 980:

There stretch'd at length the wounded hero lay,  
Patroclus cut the forky steel away;  
Then in his hands a bitter root he bruis'd,  
The wound he washed, the styptick juice infus'd.  
The closing flesh that instant ceas'd to glow,  
The wound to torture, and the blood to flow.

We see likewise Eurepelus In the Same Book giving *Patroclus* Directions how to manage his Wounds 963:

and draw this deadly dart;  
With lukewarm water wash the gore away,  
With healing balms the raging smart allay.

After the Destruction of Troy we know little of y<sup>e</sup> professors of this Art till y<sup>e</sup> great Divine *Hippocrates* who was descended from Hercules and Æsculapius begun in a Lineall Discent the 20 from y<sup>e</sup> one and the 18 or 19 from y<sup>e</sup> other. He is y<sup>e</sup> Father of Medecine and y<sup>e</sup> first y<sup>t</sup> Compiled it and brought it into order and laid down to its posterity Certain Unerring Rules confirmed by experience. In his Works there are several treatises of Surgery as of Ulcers fistulas fractures Luxations Wounds of y<sup>e</sup> head &c and thro' y<sup>e</sup> whole there are a great Number of Precepts and Observation interspers'd; whoever desires a more Compleat History of this Illustrious Parent of Physick May consult Le Clarks History De L' Medec:\* or Fallopius In his Preface to his Book De capitis Vulneribus. † All Hippocrates's [?family] had been for several

\* This may refer to Alexander Trallianus, who in le Clerc's History is grouped with the other three mentioned here.

† "Tryphon pater, et Euclpistris Phlegitis filius, et, ut ex scriptis ejus intelligi potest, horum eruditissimus Meges," Celsus *De Medicina*, Book VII.

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Ages before him and continued after his Death to be physicians, But either did not write or else their Works were lost before our Days: the Greek Physicians whose Works have been transmitted to us and who frequently treat of Surgery Also; are *Ægineta Paulus, Oribasius, Ætius, Tallop*:\* and the great *Galen*; Amongst y<sup>e</sup> Romans *Celsus*, the Latin Hippocrates is y<sup>e</sup> only Author tho' he mentions several others famous in his Day, In y<sup>e</sup> preface to his 7<sup>th</sup> Book of Medecine to wit *Tryphon, Enelbistris* and *Meges*† but there is no other Monuments of them; he likewise in y<sup>t</sup> Preface tells us that after Hippocrates several Ægyptian Surgeons were very famous particularly *Phyloxinus* who he calls a great Author that has most diligently treated of this Subject in several Volumes,§ *Gorgias, Sostrates* the 2 Chirones Apollonij with some others,|| whose Labours have perished are likewise named by him.

About the 6 Century after our Saviour all Europe was over run by y<sup>e</sup> barbarous Goths & Vandals and all Literature and Liberal Arts were abolished very near; Amongst y<sup>e</sup> rest Medecine Suffer'd very much; only in Spain Asia & Africa some Arabians becoming Masters of y<sup>e</sup> old Libraries still keep y<sup>e</sup> knowledge of Medecine in those parts: the most famous of them are *Avicenna, Averrhoes, Rhasis* and *Albucasis* who treat likewise of Surgery. About ye 9<sup>th</sup> Century Learning began to spread itself again and Medecine as a part of it to flourish; but all y<sup>e</sup> Authors were so much begottd to y<sup>e</sup> Opinions of Galen & those Arabians y<sup>t</sup> their Authority were ipse Dixit & was Evidence enough to ballance Matters of Fact.

In y<sup>e</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> Century y<sup>e</sup> Chimists began violently to oppose y<sup>e</sup> Galenical Doctrines, each of this Sect had their followers and Admirers who were entirely wedded to y<sup>e</sup> Opinion of y<sup>e</sup> Patrons. And thus they Continued in a State of Schism till late World thought fit to throw of y<sup>t</sup> Slavery of Implicit faith & to hearken to Nothing but what was founded on Experiments or just sound reasoning. There have been such Numbers of Authors that have wrote on Surgery these several Years & Ages past y<sup>t</sup> it would consume too much time and y<sup>t</sup> to very little purpose to give you a Catalogue of their Works Since at your Leisure in Vander Lyndens *Scriptis Medicis*¶ you may see them and that I shall be obliged to mention the most considerable of them in this following Discourse. This short Sketch of the history of Surgery I think sufficient for our purpose; if you desire a further account consult Aurelius Sevirenus *De efficac: Medic: \*\* Lib: Pars: i Cap: 2<sup>d</sup> De vario Chirurgicorum Statu.*

The very Designation of y<sup>e</sup> art [blank, ? chirurgia] which might be applied to any Work or Operation of the Hand; But is appropriated to this part of Medecine which Sufficiently Denotes y<sup>e</sup> excellency; then let us observe how many Princes & Heroes have exercis'd it; for besides those already mentioned which at least declares y<sup>e</sup> practice In Homer's Days, History furnishes us with a great many and particularly one y<sup>t</sup> I shall mention of is our own King James y<sup>e</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> one of y<sup>e</sup> best Princes that ever swayed y<sup>e</sup> Scepter. Buchannan towards the end of his Life tells us y<sup>e</sup> one thing he greedily suckt in from Antient Custom most Skilfully to treat Wounds which Skill was of old Common all to our Scotch Nobility.††

Then let us Consider what great honour has Man done y<sup>e</sup> professors of this Science. Hippocrates had statues§§ erected for him at y<sup>e</sup> publick Charge, Galen was Invited by princes to their Courts, then y<sup>e</sup> Dayly experience we have of y<sup>e</sup> Numbers that are saved from ye Jaws of Death By it sufficiently shows its Usefulness. Homer *Iliad* 11 Makes one of his Heroes speak this of Machaon who as far as we can learn was Employ'd in Surgery, Pope 636

\* Daniel le Clerc. *Histoire de la Médecine*. 1729.

† G. Fallopio. *De parter medicinae quae chirurgia nuncupatur, nec non in librum Hippocratis de vulneribus capitulis dilucidissima interpretatio* 1571.

§ Claudius Philoxenus, 'qui pluribus voluminibus hanc partem diligentissime comprehendit', *ibid.*

|| 'Gorgias quoque et Sostratus, et Herones et Apollonii duo et Ammonius Alexandrinus, multique alli celebres viri, singuli quaedam repererunt', *ibid.*

¶ J. A. van der Linden *De scriptis medicis*, 1637.

\*\* M. A. Severino *De efficaci medicina*, 1646.

†† George Buchanan *Rerum Scotticarum Historia*, Book XIII, concerning James IV: 'Unum e vetustatis consuetudine, hausit avide, ut vulnera scientissime tractaret: cujus rei perita toti Scotorum nobilitati, ut hominibus in armis assidue viventibus, fuerat prisca temporibus communis.'

§§ The word written is 'hatnes': the above seems the most likely interpretation, an error having occurred in transcription from the original notes, due to confusion of a long s at the beginning, and an n for a u.

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A wise physician, skill'd our wounds to heal,  
Is more than armies to the public weal.

Hence we may at least Conclude y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> prosecution of y<sup>e</sup> hand for removing Diseases has for its Subject and remedies only those Malladys that our Senses are subject to.

But as y<sup>e</sup> right understanding of these is absolutely necessary for knowing & judging internal Diseases and y<sup>t</sup> in Chirurgical Cases the patient is very often committed to y<sup>e</sup> Surgeons Care entirely, or a Doctor cannot be had, he cannot be a good Surgeon who is not a good Physician,\* who is not pretty well acquainted with y<sup>e</sup> other parts of Medecine nay perfectly Master of some of them wherefore in y<sup>e</sup> following Discourses I shall not so strictly Confine my Self to the Topical Applications But likewise hint at the Internal Remedies as far as I shall think it necessary for Surgeons to be acquainted with them in several Cases.

This particular Science is divided into four branches.

1<sup>st</sup> *Synthesis* or Joining or reuniting parts y<sup>t</sup> are contrary to y<sup>e</sup> Design of Nature seperated, as in Curing of Wounds, reducing Luxations, Setting of fractures.

2<sup>d</sup> *Dieresis* Dividing or seperating those parts y<sup>t</sup> by their Union are hurtfull as in perforating y<sup>e</sup> Anus or Vulva of Children, seperating of Members grown together after burning.

3<sup>d</sup> *Exa resis* Or taking away what is Superfluous or Noxious as in Amputating a Sphacelated Member, Extracting Bullets lodged within y<sup>e</sup> Body, Letting out extravasated blood, Matter or Pus.

4<sup>th</sup> *Prothesis*; or making up any Want or Supplying a defect; as fitting wooden Leggs to Stumps, setting in Artificial Eyes or Teeth.

To perform these things right a Surgeon Besides being acquainted with all parts of Medecine particularly in Anatomy should have according to Celsus in his Preface to his 7<sup>th</sup> book these other qualifications. Viz<sup>t</sup> A strong steady hand, that does not shake, using both right and left, a Distinct sharp sighted Eye, not timorous nor so much given to pity y<sup>t</sup> he cant go thro' his work, or moved w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> patients Cries so as either to make too great hast or cutt less than is necessary but ought to do everything as if he were not affected at all with y<sup>e</sup> patients Complaints.† A regular Surgeon thus qualified who would practise right Ought before he goes about the Cure to be thoroughly acquainted with y<sup>e</sup> History of the Disease, in which he is to have regard to the Patients Sex, to his Age, to his Constitution and former way of living; and Inform himself how ye Disease encreased, if there was any known Cause for it, then to Consider y<sup>e</sup> Nature of it, and place it is in, and y<sup>e</sup> effects it has produced, which knowledge is called ye *Diagnosis* whence y<sup>e</sup> *Prognosis* or what y<sup>e</sup> Consequence will be must be drawn and then see what Method of Cure is pointed out which is termed y<sup>e</sup> *Indication*. . .

The Indication must vary always according to the Diagnosis. If the Patient was used to a great quantity of strong Liquors Debarring him entirely y<sup>e</sup> use of it might be destructive whereas to others not accustomed therewith it would be of y<sup>e</sup> worst Consequence. A young Plethorick person would require to be blooded plentifully; An old emanciated person, and a feeble Patient would need Cordials. . . . By Glancing at these few out of a vast Number of particular Cases y<sup>t</sup> might be supposed, and so dayly happen in practise one cant but be convinced of y<sup>e</sup> vast advantage of a rationall Surgeon whose practise is confirmed and adapted to y<sup>e</sup> different Exigencies of his patients above any meer Empirick who pretends to any Infallible remedy for a particular Disease, without dipping further in y<sup>e</sup> Affair y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Disease is ranked to in such a Class which he believes his Arcanum will soon drive away wherever Lodged.

1<sup>st</sup> When once the Operation to be perform'd is Determined, the Rule is to do it quickly; without however neglecting what is necessary, for Hurrying.

\* In the notes the words 'Surgeon' and 'Physician' are transposed.

† 'Esse autem chirurgus debet adolescens, aut certe adolescentiae propior; manu strenua, stabili, nec unquam intremiscente, eaque non minus sinistra, quam dextra promptus; acie oculorum acri, claraque; animo intrepidus, immisericors, sic, ut sanari velit eum, quem accepit, non ut clamore ejus motus, vel magis, quam res desiderat, properet, vel minus, quam necesse est, secet: sed perinde faciet omnia, ac si nullus ex vaminibus alterius affectus oriretur,' Celsus, *op. cit.*

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- 2<sup>d</sup> Easily; putting y<sup>o</sup> patient to as little pain as possible yet not sparing him to his Cost.  
3<sup>d</sup> Safely; The Surgeon is not to be too venturesome or foollhardy yet to go about his Duty Duly and regularly.

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## A SPANISH ROYAL DECREE OF 1617 CONCERNING THE EXAMINATION OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

THE Medical Ordinance of Phillip II of Spain, of which the following is a translation, bears the title of:

*Permitaca, en que se da la orden que se ha de tener en el examen de los Medicos y Cirujanos, y en el Protomedicato, y demas ccasas que en ella se declaran.* Madrid, Juan de la Cuesta, 1617.

### ROYAL DECREE

in which is laid down the order to be observed in the examining of Physicians, Surgeons and Court Physicians, together with other matters herein mentioned. Printed in Madrid by Juan de Cuesta, 1617.

Sold at the shop of Francisco de Robles, Bookseller to Our Lord the King.

PHILIP BY THE GRACE OF GOD King of Castille, Leon, Aragon, The Two Sicilies, etc, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Brabant, etc, Count of Hapsburgh, Flanders, etc, Lord of Vizcaya, etc, Sovereign of the East and West Indies, etc, etc. TO the Most Serene Prince Philip Our Beloved Son and to the Princes of the Blood, Prelates, Dukes, Marquesses, etc, Lords of Our Council, Judges, etc, and all other Our Subjects to whom these presents shall come GREETING. KNOW YE that We are informed by learned persons zealous for the common good that in these Our Kingdoms, Duchies, etc, there is much lack of reliable Physicians so that they are wanting even to attend upon Us and Our Royal Family. THAT in the lifetime of the King Our father (Whom God receive) a remedy was sought a law being made in the year 1588 in which instructions were laid down to be followed by the Chief Physician and other Examiners in the examination of Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries. THAT this not sufficing, His Majesty issued a further Decree in the year 1597 giving instructions to be followed in the examination of Physicians and many other matters. All which not sufficing and seeing that the said faculty was in a state of decline, We laid the matter before Our Council that, informed by learned persons as to the cause thereof, We might devise a remedy. For which reason the Lords of Our Council sent to the three principal Universities of Our Kingdoms that the Faculty of Medicine be convened in each one of them. And after many such meetings it appeared that the principal reason for the lack of good Physicians is to be found in the method of teaching during past years adopted in Universities (for it is this that determines, for good or ill, the standard of the Faculty), namely; the wasting of time in vain disputes and irrelevant matters which have no bearing on the cause, diagnosis and cure of diseases; the not reading, as used to be done, the writings of Galen, Hippocrates and Avicenna but the wasting of time in dictation and not reading aloud the original texts. For in times past the Faculty produced good