



MEDICAL HISTORY

Ambrose Paré

LOUIS H. RODDIS, M.D.

COLONEL FIELDING H. GARRISON's selections as the 3 greatest surgeons of all time were Ambrose Paré, John Hunter, and Joseph Lister. The first 2 of these were also among the greatest of military surgeons.

Ambrose Paré was born in 1510 at Laval, a small city in north-western France. Apprenticed to a barber surgeon he came to Paris at the age of 19 to make his way as did many a young fellow from the provinces before and since. Here he had plenty of both hospital and private practice and must have attained some reputation for, in 1537, when King Francis I sent an army into Italy, Paré accompanied it as surgeon to the infantry commander. Paré later records some of the events of his first campaign including one of his most important surgical innovations. A captain of a company of foot soldiers named Ratt was wounded in the right ankle and as he fell said "Now is the rat taken," certainly one of the worst puns of the 16th century. With this case Paré makes the first use of the celebrated phrase that he used many times in his



AMBROSE PARÉ

"One of the three greatest surgeons of all time."

writings and is inscribed on his monument, "I treated him and God healed him." It had been the custom for a long time to treat gunshot wounds and indeed most wounds, with boiling oil as the first application. The pain was terrible and the slough that followed even worse. After one engagement his supply of oil was exhausted before he had treated all his cases, so, to some he applied a simple protective dressing. These

Medical History

latter cases healed so much more quickly with less infection, pain, or complications he never used the hot oil again, and his results and the advocacy of a plain dressing put an end to the boiling oil era. It was the introduction or rather the re-introduction of the ligature to control bleeding that was the greatest contribution of Paré to modern surgery. The 3 great essentials of our surgery today are anesthesia, asepsis and hemorrhage control. The ligature had been used in ancient times; was described by Celsus and a number of medieval surgeons as well as by Vesalius. It was Paré, however,

that made it the standard method for the control of bleeding to replace the cautery and acupuncture. Here is his description:

"let the veins and arteries be beound up as speedily and streightly as you can; that so the course of the flowing blood may be stopped and wholly stayed. Which may be done by taking hold of the vessels with your Crowes beake, whereof this is the figure.**** When you have drawn them forth, binde them with a strong double thread."

The "Crowes beake" that is figured in his book is a good duplicate of an excellent hemostat such as you can see in any catalogue of modern surgical instruments.



Placidyl®

NONBARBITUATE (ETHCHLORVYNOL, ABBOTT)

nudges your patient to sleep

.....

during
pregnancy



gentle
overnight
laxative
action



Taken at bedtime, pleasant-tasting Agoral works gently and effectively, without disturbing sleep, to produce a normal bowel movement the following morning. At the hospital, too, nurses and post-partum patients alike value the convenience and dependability of Agoral. To promote natural bowel function, prescribe non-habit-forming Agoral.

agoral[®]
the gentle laxative



Medical History

The powerful mind, courage, and integrity of Paré led to many original developments in medicine, surgery, and obstetrics. He was the first to suggest aneurysm of the aorta as a sequel of syphilis. He described hypertrophy of the prostate; fracture of the neck of the femur, and the exarticulation of the elbow joint. He was probably the first to perform this operation. It was Paré who introduced podalic version into obstetrics and by his description made it a practicable procedure. He devised many instruments, improved artificial limbs; employed gold and silver artificial eyes; and popularized the truss for hernia. He was one of the first to re-implant teeth. If not the first he was one of the first to point to the fly as a transmitter of disease.

At a time when all medical and scientific books were in Latin, Paré, because he had no formal education, wrote in French. This made his work readily available to many who, like himself, had little or no knowledge of the classical languages. His first book was a small treatise on gunshot wounds and was printed in 1545. His 2nd work published 4 years later was a practical anatomy and in the appendix to it he describes podalic version. The reputation of Paré as a surgeon has overshadowed the fact that he was a fine anatomist. In 1561 he published a general human anatomy that is one of the

Medical History

rarest of the medical classics. There is said to be but one copy in the whole of Great Britain. A little treatise on medical jurisprudence is one of the first on the subject of real value. In 1572 his great work on surgery was printed to which later additions were made. In 1575 his collected works were published and 4 editions were issued by 1585. This last edition contained his most remarkable work, *An Apology and Treatise Concerning Divers Journeys*. It is a picture of 16th century life, autobiography, and a medical and surgical case book. It deserves a place as one of the world's great books. It is not only entertaining reading but the medical man today can profit from the experiences so graphically described by this great master surgeon of the Renaissance. As one reads the *Apology* it is evident that Paré had not only superb surgical judgment and dexterity but also was filled with sympathy and kindness that was reflected onto his patients, and that he devoted himself ceaselessly to their welfare. This is well shown in the following incident. A badly wounded man who was considered beyond help was to be left behind in a retreat and would have been murdered by the peasants. Paré intervened with the man's commander and in these words tells the story in the *Apology*:

"I moved with pitty told him that he might yet be cured if he were well

drest: divers Gentlemen of the company prayd that he would cause him to be brought along with the Baggage, seeing I had the willingnesse to dresse him: to which he agreed, and after that I had cloth'd him, he was but put into a cart upon a bed well covered and well accommodated, which one horse did draw. I did the office of a Physician, Apothecary, Chirurgion, and Cooke; I drest him even to the end of his cure, and God cured him, in so much that all these three Companies admired at this cure. The horsemen of the Company of Monsieur de Rohan, the first muster that was made, gave me each one, one Crowne, and the Archers halfe a Crowne."

It is a moving story of compassion and devotion to his profession and is told by Paré with justifiable pride. It really typifies the man's character and explains when added to inherent genius it made him admired and accepted as the greatest surgeon of his time.

In the siege of Metz in 1552 a request was made to the king asking that Paré be sent and if possible introduced secretly through the enemies lines. His presence in the city (for he arrived there safely) was regarded as equal to a reinforcement of a thousand men. He went through the long and desperate siege in the midst of winter, cared for the French wounded, and when the siege was raised was ordered also to attend the wounded and sick Spaniards left behind when their army gave up the attempt to take Metz. Upon his return to Paris the king

Medical History

gave him 200 gold crowns in addition to 100 given him when he set out for the city. The king told him in Paré's own words:

"he would not leave me poore; then I thanked him most humbly for the good and the honour which he pleased to doe me."

Indeed when Paré died at the age of 80 he was both rich and famous. Perhaps the strongest evidence of the esteem in which he was held and the value placed on his services was the fact that he was the only Protestant in France officially ordered spared in the Massacre of St Bartholomew in 1572. One story has it that he was

kept in the king's own apartments in the palace to assure his safety. When the great soldier-surgeon died in 1590 his works had been translated into Latin and he was known throughout Europe; he had been the confidential medical advisor of 3 kings of France; he was a veteran of many of the most celebrated military campaigns of the 16th century and was loved and honored by thousands who had been his patients and by their grateful families and friends. The 19 year old apprentice barber surgeon arriving in Paris unknown and poor from a little provincial town had come a long way.

4420 Braeburn Road,
San Diego 16, California

>>> <<<

Educational Value of Psychoanalysis

PSYCHOANALYSIS essays to change the structure of a patient's mind, to change his view of things, to change his motivations, to strengthen his sincerity; it strives, not just to diminish his sufferings, but to enable him to learn from them.

The educational value of psychoanalysis grows, in my mind. It is an intensive post-academic education, albeit an expensive one. We used to discuss whether or not it would be desirable for all those who could afford it to be psychoanalyzed. The better question is how to make it financially possible for all those who teach psychiatry and the social sciences to have the experience. I think it is more important for them to get a new concept of themselves, of human beings, and of the world so as better to guide their students than for a similar number of sufferers to be relieved of their symptoms. To the educational value of psychoanalysis we must add its value as a research tool. No other therapeutic method has taught us so much about the human mind.

—*Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique*, by Karl Meninger.

Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1958.