

Von den giftigen Besen Tempfen
vñ Keüchen/der Arctal/als Silber/ Queck-
silver Bley vnd anders So die Edlen handt
werck des Golt Schmids/ vnd ander arbei-
ter in des feür sich gebrauchen müssen Wie sie
sich da mit halten vnd die gift vertreibē solle.



V.Engelshofen.

77

1533

Moody Medical Library

THE
Bookman

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston • August 1977

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Title page of Ulrich
Ellenbog's Von den gifftigen besen Tempffen
und Reuchen (1524). For further information,
see p.1.

COVER DESIGN by Jody Armand, Public Information
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Publications Committee: Inci A. Bowman, Alex C. Bienkowski,
Pauline V. Power.

AN EXTREMELY RARE PAMPHLET IN UTMH LIBRARY

We are pleased to reprint the entire text of an extremely rare pamphlet, Ulrich Eilenberg's Von den giftigen dampfen Teuffen und Rauchen (1555), which is owned by the Moody Medical Library, UTMH. The only other known copy is at the Munich University Library. Written by an Augsburg physician in 1555, the pamphlet deals with toxic fumes and vapors which affect metal workers, especially goldsmiths. Eilenberg attended the Universities of Vienna, Heidelberg and Pavia, receiving his medical degree from the latter institution in 1555. While he occupied an official position as physician to the Cathedral in Augsburg, he had the opportunity to observe certain occupational injuries among goldsmiths. Considered one of the earliest texts on occupational medicine, the Eilenberg pamphlet cautioned against harmful fumes of lead, mercury, arsenic, silver and nitric acid, and carbon monoxide, and listed numerous preventive measures. Eilenberg died in 1599, and the text was not printed for another twenty-five years.

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THE TREATISE*

On the poisonous evil vapours and fumes of metals such as silver, quicksilver, lead, and others that the noble craft of goldsmiths and other workers must give in the fume. How they shall deal themselves and drive away the poison.

To the skilled, subtle and noble craft of Goldsmithing of the Imperial City of Augsburg.

My willing devoted service be ready for you all. As I, Ulrich

*Reprinted from The Lippert, January 28, 1932, pp.230-23. The text was translated into English by Cyril Bernard.

AN EXTREMELY RARE PAMPHLET IN UTMB LIBRARY

We are pleased to reprint the entire text of an extremely rare pamphlet, Ulrich Ellenbog's Von den gifftigen besen Tempffen und Reuchen (1524), which is owned by the Moody Medical Library, UTMB. The only other known copy is at the Munich University Library. Written by an Augsburg physician in 1473, the pamphlet deals with toxic fumes and vapors which affect metal workers, especially goldsmiths. Ellenbog attended the Universities of Vienna, Heidelberg and Pavia, receiving his medical degree from the latter institution in 1459. While he occupied an official position as physician to the Cathedral in Augsburg, he had the opportunity to observe certain occupational injuries among goldsmiths. Considered one of the earliest texts on occupational medicine, the Ellenbog pamphlet cautioned against harmful fumes of lead, mercury, antimony, silver and nitric acid, and carbon monoxide, and listed numerous preventive measures. Ellenbog died in 1499, and the text was not printed for another twenty-five years.

THE TREATISE*

On the poisonous evil vapours and fumes of metals such as silver, quicksilver, lead, and others that the noble craft of goldsmiths and other workers must use in the fire. How they shall deal therewith and drive away the poisons.

To the skilful, subtle and noble craft of Goldsmithery of the Imperial City of Augsburg.

My willing devoted service be ready for you all. As I, Ulrich

*Reprinted from The Lancet, January 30, 1932, pp.270-71. The text was translated into English by Cyril Barnard.

Ellenbog, Doctor of Physick, of Feldkirch, now Physician to the Dean and Chapter of Augsburg Cathedral, have observed the great, severe and remarkable harm whereto this skilful craft cometh through the fumes and vapours of the things wherewith the said craft hath to work, so I could not withhold or refrain from giving advice for the service and help of the craftsmen, that they come not to such grievous harm or disease through these fumes. Also I pray you, masters and men, that ye take in all good part and friendship this my little advice, written with mine own hand, then the reader will I be with friendly services to you each and all who command and work. Given at Augsburg the 6th day of October, 1473.

Of the fire of coals.--In your subtle craft ye use coals for the fire. The smoke or vapour of the same is poisonous and particularly if the coals be somewhat damp, for this vapour burdeneth the head and also the chest, especially if one be near it for long, and when one tarrieth there too long, the sight waxeth dim, so that it seemeth as if there be green and blue and such like before his eyes, or flies in the air. This vapour also maketh heavy, unnatural sleep and oftentimes heavy limbs, and if one be therein for long he becometh palsied. Therefore burn not much damp coal, let it kindle in the open air. In winter time when ye have coal fire in the workshop, shut not the windows and guard yourselves from this vapour so far as ye may, is my advice. The writings shew that it is quite poisonous and deadly to live and sleep for long in a closed room with this coal-vapour. As many masters in physick prove this, for brevity's sake it needeth not be pointed out. If ye craftsmen will use coal fires, first kindle and blow them up in the open air, then lay white incense therein or sprinkle a little wine thereon. So will the poison and harm of this vapour be lessened.

Of the vapour of quicksilver, lead and other metals wherewith goldsmiths do use to work.

The writings of physick hold that the vapour of every thing retaineth the nature, complexion and power of the body whence it issueth. Wherefore are the apothecaries wont to make distilled waters that are of a hot nature when they take hot herbs, and from cold herbs that distil cold waters. Wherefore it is also that the smoke or vapour of each metal retaineth the complexion, nature and power of the metal wherefrom it issueth. And often the vapour or smoke is stronger, mightier and sharper than his mineral, metal or body, as one manifestly seeth if one sublimate aqua fortis, also if one distil brandy, for the vapour is much stronger than the sal ammoniac alone, etc., or also the wine wherefrom the brandy is made. Wherefore men call and name the vapour spirits, that is ghosts, for through their sharpness, strength, and subtlety, they always penetrate and work more strongly than the body wherefrom they are drawn. Now it is apparant in the writings of nature that quicksilver is right cold and wet in his complexion and also action, also that lead is cold and wet, likewise that silver is of a cold nature, likewise litharge and antimony are cold. Wherefore I say that the smoke and vapour of the said metals chilleth greatly the man who hath to work therewith. Wherefore when ye masters and men work silver with lead, or gild, ye shall guard yourselves as far as ye may from the vapour and smoke, for it is poisonous to you, and it is my advice that ye do it in the open air with all diligence, and not in a closed room. Also ye shall not bend too much over this vapour but turn away therefrom and bind up the mouth. This vapour of quicksilver, silver and lead is a cold poison, for it maketh heaviness and tightness of the chest, burdeneth the limbs and oftentimes lameth them as often one seeth in foundries where men do work with large masses and the vital inward members become burdened therefrom.

How One Shall Lessen and even Turn Aside the
Harm of these Vapours.

Dear masters and men, when ye refine or gild, have musk by you, and ye shall smell of this much and often, for the vapour of the musk quelleth and suppresseth by his warmth the coldness of the smoke from silver, lead and quicksilver. Also the musk, by the property that it hath of strengthening the vital members of the heart and brain, wardeth off and assuageth the harm from the vapour of lead and quicksilver, therefore the same vapour cannot harm you so. Likewise what time ye goldsmiths be in the aforesaid fumes, keep in your mouths one of the following pieces, which ye will, and chew it, so by the strength of these pieces will be corrected and lessened the poisoning of the vapour that ye draw in with the air for your breath. Thus the said vapour cannot so harm you as if ye held not the pieces or their like in your mouths. And these are the pieces: juniper berries, rue, dittany, that is a pure white root, tormentil, elecampane. Many other pieces are commended by the physicians against these poisonous vapours, but these aforesaid seven pieces are good for you, also common enough that ye and everyone can get them at small cost. Some teachers of physick highly commend the emerald, which one shall also hold in the mouth, for it withstandeth the poisoning of this vapour. Also, dear craftsmen, if one of you in gilding or refining hath inhaled much vapour, so that he feeleth distressed or feareth harm, he shall on the morrow, fasting, sweat in bed and then take a good old theriac such as a large hazelnut with rue-water or speedwell-water or wine, thus will the poisoning be driven out of him, which hath entered him in refining or gilding. The doctors also recommend that ye shall after refining or gilding drink wormwood wine, for by the warmth and heat of the wormwood the chilling of the said vapours will be suppressed. Moreover wormwood hath the property that it withstandeth the poisoning. And he who hath no wormwood

wine in his cellar may in a day or seven hours make it by dropping wormwood into wine. If however one cannot sweat in bed, he shall go on an empty stomach to the bathroom and take the theriac as before directed.

Against the vapours of aqua fortis which are warm, hot and right sharp, and against the vapours of litharge and antimony, which are of a cold nature, ye shall guard yourselves specially well as is described above for lead and quicksilver. Also some teachers say one shall eat garlic before and after against suchlike poisonous vapours.

Against the vapours of verdigris, saltpeter, and sal ammoniac guard yourselves right well because when ye fire pale gold, then these vapours are very hot, sharp and poisonous. To correct and lessen their poisoning thou shalt drink half a dram of bole mixed with wine and rosewater.

Herewith God keep us all sound. Amen