SURGERY.

The term *Surgery,* or *Chirurgery,* from *χειg, the hand,* and *εϑγοv, work,* originally signified, as its derivation implies, the manual procedure, by means of instruments or not, di­rected towards the repair of injury and the cure of disease; in contradistinction to the practice of *medicine,* denoting the treatment of disease by the administration of drugs, or other substances supposed to be of a sanative tendency. Such a meagre description applied but too justly to surgery in its infancy, and still more after its separation from its twin-sister medicine, in the twelfth century. When its practice was denounced by the Council of Tours as derogatory to the dignity of the sacred office of the priesthood, and be­neath the attention of all men of learning, the term chirur- gery, in its most literal interpretation, was quite sufficient to comprehend the duties of the degraded and uninform­ed surgeon, who had become a mere mechanic, attached to and completely dependent on the learned and philosophic physician. But the matured progress of the healing art has, fortunately for science and humanity, rendered such a definition of surgery in these days utterly untenable. Its complete separation from medicine would now be at­tended with the utmost difficulty; nor is it desirable that the attempt should be made, because its success, however partial and imperfect, would be most hurtful to both. They are now, and it is to be hoped will ever remain, one and inseparable. Their principles are the same throughout, and the exercise of their different branches requires the same fundamental knowledge ; but their details are so nu­merous and intricate as to render it most difficult, if not impossible, for any one individual to cultivate all with equal success. The consequence has been, that while the theory and principles of physic and surgery remain united, as constituting one and the same science, the practical parts are now frequently separated into distinct professions, each person adopting that department most congenial to his pursuits, and for the management of which he con­ceives himself best qualified. The separation however is not that of acquirements, but merely of practice. It should never be forgotten, that the physician, before he can be either accomplished or successful in his profession, must be intimate with the principles, if not with the practice of sur­gery. And most certainly no one can ever lay just claim even to the title of surgeon, far less hope for eminence or success, unless he be equally qualified to assume both the appellation and the employment of the physician.

Many and laboured have been the attempts to define sur­gery according to its present state, so as to prevent inter­ference with the department of physic. This example we will not follow. The arrangement as to what is medical, and what surgical, must in a great measure depend on cus­tom, not on fixed and permanent rules. The paths of the practical surgeon and physician are distinct, but in their course they must often cross each other ; and these colli­sions, 60 far from being avoided, ought rather to be sought, as probable sources of mutual benefit, so long as those enlightened feelings are entertained, and that honourable conduct pursued, which ought ever to distinguish the fol­lowers of a liberal, useful, and learned profession.

The limits allotted to this article not permitting us to enter into the details of surgery, we must content ourselves with a sketch of its history, and with some account of its improved condition as it is at present practised.

That surgery is as old as man himself, that it was coeval with his fallen state, there can be little doubt. The fall entailed the frequent reception of injuries by external violence ; and to assuage their pain and remove their in­convenience, the ingenuity and contrivance of the sufferer were powerfully excited. Thus it would seem, that as to antiquity of origin, surgery must take precedence of medi­cine. And after wars and dissensions began to prevail, and wounds and injuries became both more frequent and more deadly, it is most probable that to these the practitioners of the healing art alone directed their attention, before the nature of disease began to be understood, or its cure was supposed to be within the reach of human means.

As to the state of surgery among the early Egyptians, we know but little, except that it was customary, in the time of. Joseph, to embalm the dead ; a process which appertains close­ly to both medicine and surgery. There are some grounds, however, for suspecting that they were more conversant with surgery than is generally supposed ; for it is said that on “ the ruined walls of the renowned temples of ancient Thebes, basso-relievos have been found, displaying surgi­cal operations, and instruments not far different from some in use in modern times.” Their medical practice, entirely founded on incantation and astrology, was sufficiently simple. They divided the body into thirty-six parts, believing in an equal number of demons, to whom those parts were intrust­ed, and to invoke whose aid in sickness was the principal duty of the physician, each spirit being called upon to cure his own peculiar portion.

Among the Jews, the operation of circumcision was per­formed, no doubt skilfully and dexterously, though with rude implements, by the priesthood, an order which, for many ages, and in many climes, conjoined the cure of the body with that of the soul.

The earliest notice of this art is from the ancient Greeks, who, it is probable, had derived their medical traditions from the Egyptians. They considered medicine to be of divine origin ; and its first professors, as they inform us, were no less personages than gods and sons of gods.

Medicine and surgery, at their origin, were conjoined; and both continued to be practised indiscriminately, until separated by the Arabian school. Their complete estrange­ment occurred, as we have already stated, about the middle of the twelfth century. At first, surgery chiefly occupied the attention of the ancient leech, as the more certain and more obviously useful branch of his profession ; but ulti­mately it became very secondary to medicine when dignified by philosophy and priestcraft.

Chiron the Centaur, born in Thessaly, is presumed to have been the father of surgery, celebrated for skilfully ap­plying soothing herbs to wounds and bruises. But his fame is somewhat endangered by that of Æsculapius, the son of Apollo, by some held to be the pupil of Chiron, by others, his predecessor and superior. Æsculapius is supposed to have been deified, on account of his skill, about fifty years before the Trojan war. His very existence however has been questioned. Apollo was the original god of physic among the early Greeks ; but he appears to have resign­ed in favour of Æsculapius, whose temples became the de­positories of medical and surgical knowledge; more parti­cularly those of Epidaurus, Cnidos, Cos, and Pergamus.

Certain it is, according to the testimony of Celsus, that Æsculapius is the most ancient authority in surgery. His immediate descendants, two sons, Podalirius and Machaon, have been immortalized by Homer. They followed Aga­memnon to the Trojan war, and there their services were so highly valued as to secure them a not unconspicuous niche among the heroes of the Iliad. Of the two, Machaon seems to have beep the more distinguished. When he is wounded by Paris, the whole army is represented as interested in