

In the meantime, the wound was to be carefully washed with fair clean water, covered with a clean, soft, linen cloth, and cleansed once a day from pus and other impurities.

The theory given out was that the dead criminal or animal died full of secret reluctancy and vindictive murmurs and with a high flame of revengeful feeling. This continued after his death, and the posthumous character of revenge remained firmly impressed upon the blood and fat in the unguent. The moment the blood on weapon or splinter came in contact with this most malignant substance, it was roused to active excitement, and so obtained full power to cure its fellow blood left behind in the wounded man; and this it did by sucking out the dolorous and exotic impression from the wound.

I do not believe that Paracelsus really held any such theory; but mysticism was the fashion of the time, just as giants were the fashion in literature, when that other great physician, Rabelais, wrote, and so, of course, Rabelais had to write about giants in that astounding book abounding in pearls of wisdom, unfortunately, however, to be sought for in a bucketful of filth. Patients then required magic as they still require medicine. Then a wounded man would have been as much disappointed and dissatisfied by simply having his wound washed as a typhoid patient would now be without something to take besides care. Placebos have and always had their place in your science.

If any one desires to know the treatment of wound, *secundum artem*, at that period, let him read the story of John Ridd in Blackmore's "Lorna Doone."

Until Lister's time, no better treatment for wounds was ever known than that of Paracelsus and his imitators; and they knew and recognized the value of impressing the imagination. They were called "quacks," and were subjected to the ridicule of the regular profession—so was Sir Kenelm Digby in England, who cured wounds in much the same way. He took any article which had been dipped in the wounded man's blood and put it in a solution of a powder of vitriol—"powder of sympathy" he called it—and directed the patient to throw away all plasters from his wound, only to keep the wound clean and at moderate temperature betwixt heat and cold.