

tise any but his own peculiar branch, and some attended solely to diseases of the teeth. Proofs of their skill have been found in some mummies at Thebes whose teeth were stuffed with gold.

So much for the disease ; but what of the cure ? Maistre Arnould gives several prescriptions, but they are commonplace compared with more ancient remedies. Here are two methods from Pliny : Put your hands behind your back ; bite off a piece of wood from a tree which has been struck by lightning, and apply it to the ailing tooth. Or you may fumigate the tooth with the tooth of another of the same sex—how that is done we are not told—and bind the canine tooth of an unburied corpse to it. Habdarrahman on Egyptian medicine advises that the molar of a dead man—whether buried or not apparently does not matter—be hung over the groaning sufferer, and the pain will abate. Others, again, say : “ Burn a wolf’s head and keep the ashes. They are a great remedy.” It is difficult to cap the piquancy of such cures ; but Sir Thomas More has done it, and his prescription has the advantage of not requiring such inaccessible materials. “ I have heard it taught me,” he says in 1557, “ for the toothache to go thrice about a churchyard and never think on a fox’s tail.” This reminds one in its malicious pleasantry of “ Don’t nail his ears to the pump ” ; for the suggestion of foxes’ tails in connection with churchyards, though not very obvious to the common man, must always and inevitably recur to those who tried the cure.

The man in dental anguish sometimes curses with Burns “ the venom’d stang that shoots his tortured gums along.” Sometimes, on the other hand, he prays. St. Augustine in his *Confessions* relates how he once suffered from “ *dolor dentium* ” (toothache), apparently in an aggravated form, for he could not speak. Thereupon he wrote on wax a prayer to God for the other brethren to repeat ; and as soon as all were on their knees the pain went. “ But what a pain ! ” he says—“ never since my tender age had I experienced the like.” Southey, in his *Life of John Wesley*, tells of that eminent preacher that when his own tooth ached he prayed, and the pain left him. Unfortunately, ordinary men do not seem to have such efficacious faith. When the excruciation begins they must bare it philosophically ; and on Shakespeare’s authority toothache finds out just the weak place in the philosopher’s armor of patience. In the middle ages the devout who were racked with