

In the days of Mirfeld there were treatises on the diseases of horses and cattle. To protect horses and cattle from epidemics, three poor travellers were to be entertained on Christmas day, and given beds of hay to sleep on. This hay was afterwards to be placed between the horses and cattle at night. This would ward off disease. Mirfeld had often witnessed the insomnia of fevers, and for this the prayer of the Christians of Ephesus should be repeated, with the names of the seven ephesian sleepers, namely, Maximian, Malchus, Dionysius, Marcian, John Constantine, and Serapion. In the treatment of the furred tongue of fever he says that it should be cleaned with a piece of linen moistened with some acid juice. As a test for death he states if a small piece of burnt lard be placed under the nose, if the person is alive he would place his hand there to remove the lard. He says that leprosy is incurable, but that in one case he did good by brisk purging. He treated gout by an ointment of goose fat, and gives a lengthy account of how the goose must be prepared. Chronic rheumatism was treated by rubbing on olive oil, repeating part of the Psalm, "Why rage the people," and two prayers.

John Mirfeld has a good deal to say about epilepsy, apoplexy, and hemicrania. In the case of an epileptic it was taught that they would regain consciousness and get up after a certain prayer had been repeated in his ear. As epileptics soon rise, much virtue was assigned to the formula, and it came to be frequently employed in cases of apoplexy. The difference between epilepsy and apoplexy in those days was but little known.

Mirfeld's master treated a canon who fell from his horse and injured his head. He was unconscious for some time. He rubbed the head with oil of roses and vinegar, put on some powder. Then a cloth soaked in the oil and vinegar, then a linen strap, and bandaged all on. He rubbed the back of the neck with an ointment. By the fourth day the canon could speak a little. On the sixth day he gave him some chicken broth. This famous master then advised the patient to eat the brains of fowls and kids until his own brains had recovered.

From references in the manuscript, it would appear that Mirfeld's *Florarium* was written between 1362 and 1369. In this he says that gluttony slays more than the sword. Foods should not be mixed. Bread should be taken at one meal and meat at another. It is evident that Mirfeld had read Bernard of Gardon's *Lily of Medicine*, John Gaddesden's *English Rose*. He was familiar with the fact that injury to one side of the body, affected the opposite side. He was a man of much reading, and of independent observation, and anxious to the best for the sick.