

mild, old or rebellious—these stubborn or rebellious ulcers being often called cacoethic or sometimes Chironian “from Chiron, the Centaur, son of Saturn who, like to be surprised in adultery by his wife, transformed himself . . . into a hourse, upon which his paramour. . . brought forth a kind of monster, having the upper part man and the rest an horse. . . he was a most excellent physician and surgeon . . . and for the cure of rebellious sores or ulcers, when they had tried all others, they were forced to be beholden to Chiron—and thus you have the poets’ ground for calling stubborn ulcers by the name Chironian”.

“In the cure of ulcers. . . there are many intentions”, but these in general reduce to four,” Digestion, Mundification or Detersion. Incarnation and Cicatrization”, “Digestion” here means the production of healthy pus, “laudable pus” as it was called in my student days; and the best treatment was with the “old medicament of the Terebinth, cum ovi vitello with or with Basilicon” (a very favourite ointment so called for its supposed Royal or Kingly virtues, or “Praecipit, Rub.” (Mercuric oxide, Hg O.)

When the Ichor or Sanies is “concocted,<sup>15</sup> and turned into pus or matter, “the notes<sup>16</sup> of which being good and laudable . . the ulcer is then said to be digested, being the first step to healing . . after this we come to mundify or cleanse which by the arist is named Deterging”. If the precipitate is rightly used there will scarcely be need of any other Detergent; but, if not, different simples are suggested. Then comes Incarnation: and “without this orderly way taken, there can be no such thing as obtaining the end you aim at, for he that goeth about to *incarn* before he *mundifies* or *detergeth* either before he *digests* is like the builder who pretends to raise a superstructure without a foundation or to lay such foundation at the housetop”.

Incarnation is “engendering good flesh to repair the substance lost”—and many are the sarcotics<sup>17</sup> recommended for the purpose ranging from aloes through barley meal to yellow basilicon. Care must be taken that “Art taking the place of Nature” is hindered from over acting her part and so producing a sarcoma—to prevent which “’tis the surgeon’s office to overlook her and, when he sees it necessary, oblige her to cease by sprinkling some more desiccation powder upon the new-raised flesh or a pledget armed with some proper epulotic,<sup>18</sup> such as Lapis Calaminaris, Cerussa (white lead), or “without vanity I may say beyond them all my Ceratum de Lapide Calaminari”; and he gives the lovely prescription.

It never occurred to any surgeon of this time that an ulcer or wound would or could heal of itself if let alone.