

Over tombs, amid graves—
 Steal on the cumber'd plain
 Clearing a stage,
 Scattering the past about,
 Comes the new age." (*Matthew Arnold.*)

Ambroise Paré was born in the little village of Bourg-Hirsent, close to Laval, in Maine, in the year 1510. His father was a "coffretier." He had a sister, Catherine, who married Gaspard Martin, a master barber surgeon of Paris a brother, Jehan, who was master barber surgeon at Vitré, in Brittany, and another brother who followed his father's trade. Gaspard Martin died after an amputation performed by Paré, and was one of the first cases where ligature was employed. The brother at Vitré is mentioned in Paré's works for his skill in detecting the sham diseases of professional beggars.

As far as can be learned, he went to the village school and received a smattering of Latin from the chaplain of one of the seigneurs of the locality. The stimulus to take up surgery was received when a surgeon, Laurence Colot, came down from Paris to perform an operation and Paré assisted him. Shortly afterwards he went to Paris to try his fortune. The masters under whom he served his apprenticeship are not known, nor is it certain whether he served all his time in Paris or not. From a skit published long after his death some idea of the lean years of Paré may be gleaned:

"The cock has scarce done crowing when the apprentice must arise, sweep and throw open the shop lest he lose the least payment that the tricks of the trade may bring him—some early bird to be shaved. From this time on till two o'clock there are fifty customers. He must comb the wigs, hang about the parlour or the staircase selling his stock, put folks hair in curl papers, cut it or singe it. Towards the evening, if the young man wishes to improve his mind he will take a book, but the dullness and weariness of learning which comes of his not being used to it soon brings him to sound sleep, with interruptions from the door bell warning him that some rustic wants his hair cut. Never did any one ask so much of a servant, never 'in the Islands' did a white man seek so greedily to get profit out of a black man as a master barber surgeon tries to make gain out of the bread and water he gives his apprentices. If it is not their afternoon off he will not let them leave the shop, not even go to lecture for fear of losing the worth of some beard which, perhaps, will not come after all. That is why, out of kindness, the professors give their lectures to these unhappy young men at four o'clock in the morning."