

## VALSALVA.

BY

S. O. MCMURTRY.

The Italian anatomist, physician and surgeon, Antonio Marie Valsalva, was born at Imola, 1666, and died at Bologna, 1723. Born of a noble family he received a liberal instruction in classical and in polite literature.

As a boy, he, as the French say "turned a curious eye" to the structure of the bodies of birds and other small animals, and as soon as his school days were over entered into the study of anatomy at the University of Bologna, a city near to his birth place of some 50,000 inhabitants. Anatomy in his day was on a fairly firm footing, owing to the splendid results of the labours of Fallopius, Vesalius and others, one hundred years before. But not satisfied with book knowledge of the subject, and wishing to see with his own eyes all that was most hidden in the human body, Valsalva dissected many subjects. Led by his teacher, the earnest Malpighi, he rose to such proficiency that in ten years after graduating, when Malpighi stepped down from office, he was appointed in his place as Professor of Anatomy in the University. This post he filled with great satisfaction, and during his office a host of clever doctors were graduated, including the great Morgagni.

Medicine and surgery claimed his attention, for he applied himself to every aspect of his chosen profession. Appointed in charge of the Hospital for Incurables, he showed enterprise by reviving the practice of ligaturing vessels which, in spite of its advantages, had given place to cauterizing. He treated with remarkable success diseases of the ear and simplified several surgical instruments. In his day surgery had been given a stimulating impulse by the increased knowledge of anatomy and also by discoveries attending upon the treatment of gunshot wounds following the invention of gunpowder. Histology was in its infancy, owing to the but recent invention of the magnifying glass and of the microscope. Valsalva applied himself with great vigour to the study of the ear, its minutest muscles and nerves. His fame spread beyond his native country, the Royal Society of London admitted himself and his teacher Malpighi as members of their order.