



Address.

AN OLD PORTRAIT OF A SURGEON.¹

BY HENRY J. BIGELOW.

It has occurred to me that the Society might like to hear the conclusions I have reached in an inquiry, which although it was made for my own amusement about a subject of no great importance, has occupied more time than I had expected, and relates to a portrait belonging to the Society.

The old portrait of a surgeon hanging on the walls of this Society and familiar to its members, was bought at Leonard's auction rooms about forty years ago. The picture has a good deal of merit, and my own interest in it lies in the fact that while bidding for it myself, I ceded it at his request to the late Mr. William Appleton, who soon after gave it to the Medical Improvement Society.

Some years ago I tried to ascertain as a matter of curiosity, whom this picture was intended to represent, and to do so I availed myself of the kind permission of the Society to have it photographed. This was about a year before I incidentally learned from our librarian that anybody else felt any interest in the subject.

Why the picture had received the honored name which remained attached to it for nearly forty years, that of Ambroise Paré, I never knew. The late Dr. Bethune told me at the time, that the portrait resembled one of Ambroise Paré which was in the folio copy of his works then belonging to Dr. Holmes and now in the possession of this Society; and the trephine which appears in the picture is an instrument so connected with the name of Paré that it seemed in some degree to corroborate this view; although I may observe that the particular trephine here represented, is not furnished with the safety guard, the "*chaperon*," devised by that surgeon.

Further and more recent consideration of the subject was mainly that of two points. 1st, the question of resemblance or non-resemblance of the features in this oil painting to those of other portraits of Paré; and, 2nd, the accessory evidence, chief of which is the supposed professorial robe in which the subject of our picture is painted.

In considering how far the features of the different portraits of Paré resemble each other, we are at once struck with the small size of the under jaw. Hardly one man in a hundred has as short a jaw as is represented in some of these portraits. Indeed this abbreviated jaw is a characteristic of the most authentic portrait of him.

Now the portrait belonging to the Society has the same short jaw. It is very short indeed; a curious coincidence, which doubtless had its influence when the name of Paré was selected for it.

I am indebted for the information which I shall be able to give, to Dr. Le Paulmier of Paris, the highest authority on this subject, who has written a most interesting and well-known biography of Ambroise Paré, entitled "*Ambroise Paré d'après de nouveaux documents découverts aux archives nationales, et des papiers de famille, 1885*," and

with whom I have been in correspondence for a year or more on this subject.

In the critical notice in his book, of the existing portraits of Ambroise Paré, which are mostly to be found in the separate editions of his works, Dr. Le Paulmier refers nearly all of them indirectly to a common original, an authentic oil painting of the great surgeon, at the Chateau de Paley,—and more directly to a well-known engraving of De-launce, which he also considers to have been taken from that painting. In view of this common origin, it might be supposed that these various engravings, however inferior most of them are as works of art, would resemble each other; and yet apart from the peculiarity of the jaw already alluded to, it is not easy to see at once how they can represent the same individual, or even to discover any resemblance between some of them but that of a short jaw, and so far as that goes the portrait of the Society might be one of them. The evidence from such portraits as are accessible in Boston cannot be said to be conclusive. But some of them are upon the table, and gentlemen can form their own opinion about this.

Next, as the Society will remember, came the additional evidence of a superb portrait by Porbus, said to be of Ambroise Paré, representing a man of noble mien and fine expression, a photograph of which the Society owns. If this portrait were one of Ambroise Paré, the Society's portrait could by no reasonable probability be supposed to represent the same individual, and to my own mind this new evidence seemed quite conclusive.

Unfortunately, on further inquiry, this fine picture attributed to Porbus turns out to be a portrait of another person. Dr. Le Paulmier says of this portrait by Porbus (*op. cit.*, page 134), "Some galleries possess pretended portraits of the illustrious Paré which represent wholly different individuals. I will only cite two, one, which is in the Chateau d'Azay-le-Rideau, bearing the modern inscription, 'Ambroise Paré, born in 1517, surgeon of King Henry III.;' and another, a magnificent portrait belonging to Madame Nelaton which figured at the late exposition of the Trocadero. This last is attributed to Pieter Porbus and represents an unknown person. We must therefore leave this out of the question.

In regard to the second point,—the supposed professorial robe or gown,—the question has been raised here whether Ambroise Paré had the right to wear this robe. It was rightly said that if he were not entitled to it, the presence of this robe in the picture, would tend to show that this is not a portrait of Ambroise Paré.

But, on the other hand, if Ambroise Paré did possess the right to wear this robe, this argument is without weight, and we are left as much in the dark as before. I shall soon show that Ambroise Paré was entitled to wear this robe.

It is at last possible to throw light upon the whole question. I can fortunately present evidence of a conclusive nature that the portrait of the Society is not that of Ambroise Paré, by showing who it really is.

I sent a photograph of the portrait to Dr. Le Paulmier of Paris, who, after a somewhat troublesome research, was able to identify it. Our pic-

¹ Read before the Boston Society for Medical Improvement, April 29, 1880.

ture is a portrait of François Hérard, a French surgeon of eminence who died in the year 1682. There is a notice of him in the "Index Funereus" of Devaux, which was a contemporaneous biographical dictionary of deceased celebrities. It says of him that he was, "A man of signal integrity, of remarkable piety and distinguished in art. He was one of those whose portraits were engraved by the order of Louis le Grand, and inserted among the portraits of men who were illustrious in art during his reign. He died December 24th, 1683." On page 50 there is a notice of his son, also a surgeon, who died before his father.

The Society's portrait is the original one of François Hérard, painted by Siere, which was engraved in 1682 by Louis Cossin. This engraving is in the large collection of portraits at the Bibliothèque Nationale, where it was discovered in a search made at the instance of Dr. Le Paulmier. As another copy might possibly be found, the print shops of Paris were searched for one, but without success. Some months after I had another careful search made but equally to no purpose. There is a large collection of engravings in Amsterdam. M. Muller wrote me that he had 10,000 engravings of physicians and surgeons, but none of Hérard. An unsuccessful search was also made in London.

The engraving here referred to has a manuscript title only. M. Le Paulmier wrote me again that this was "a portrait of F. Hérard, bourgeois de Paris, member of the college of Surgery, born in Paris and who died there December 24, 1682. The "Index Funereus," he says, "is in error in saying 1683. His portrait painted by F. Le Siere was engraved in 1682 by L. Cossin. The engraving of the Bibliothèque Nationale is like the photograph you sent me, and underneath is a manuscript inscription mentioning his name and the date of his death with his age."

"The portrait you possess is probably the original by Le Siere. It is that of a surgeon, who, if he has not left a marked trace in science, had during his life a brilliant *clientèle* and an excellent reputation."

The title upon this engraving, however, being in manuscript might possibly have been put upon the portrait of another person. I therefore ventured to again write to M. Le Paulmier upon this point. His answer will set at rest any doubts upon this question, and as it also mentions the fact that A. Paré had a right to wear a robe like the one represented in the Society's picture, I will with your permission, read a part of the letter. The Society will notice that M. Le Paulmier has now discovered another copy of the engraving of Hérard.

"It is with real pleasure," he says, "that I send you the information I have collected in regard to your portrait of Hérard."

"The National Library possesses two identical copies of his portrait engraved by L. Cossin after a picture painted by F. Siere of which you probably possess the original."

"Except that the head is turned to the left, where we see a table supporting a skull, a trephine and an elevator, these portraits are the same as that in the photograph you sent me. They measure

twenty-four centimetres in height, and nineteen in breadth."

I would say that the picture is merely reversed by printing.

"The impression *after the letter* has, engraved beneath it, the following inscription: "François Hérard of Paris, chirurgien juré, famous for trephining and other operations. F. Siere pinxit, L. Cossin sculpsit."

The père Lelong, who copies this inscription in his "Bibliothèque historique de la France," adds, "deceased at Paris, December 24, 1682."

Thinking that the Society might like to see the original text of this allusion to their picture, of which a part has been cited by M. Le Paulmier from the "Bibliothèque historique de la France" par Jacques Lelong, Paris, 1775, tom. iv., appendix, p. 210, I have placed it upon the table. It reads thus: "François Hérard de Paris, Chirurgien, fameux pour les opérations du Trepan et autres; mort a Paris le 24 Decembre, 1682. F. Siere p. — L. Cossin sc. 1682 in fol."

"The other impression, 'that *before the letter*,' writes M. Le Paulmier, "has no inscription but the names of F. Siere and L. Cossin; but underneath, some one at the end of the last century has written, 'François Hérard, chirurgien de Paris, mort en 1683 âgé de 87 ans.'"

"Let us now consider the costume," continues M. Le Paulmier. "There were formerly two classes of surgeons. One, called short-robed (*de robe courte*), comprised the barbers, barber-surgeons," of whom Ambroise Paré had been one. "The other, called long-robed (*togati*), included the master surgeons, or masters in surgery. These were members of the College of Saint Côme and had passed a more rigorous examination than the others. "It was this long robe that Ambroise Paré wore after his affiliation to Saint Côme." The significance of this affiliation will be better understood if we know what this society was.

Saint Côme and Saint Damien were the patron saints of surgeons; and gave their name to the chapelle des Cordeliers. This church of Saint Côme and Saint Damien, built in 1212, was one of two which occupied the extremities of the large area enclosed by the Rue l'Ecole de Médecine, the Rue Racine and the Rue Antoine-Dubois.

The surgeons were allowed to use the church of Saint Côme as a place of meeting for a society for medical improvement of the sixteenth century ("devaient se reunir pour s'instruire mutuellement dans leur art") and also as a surgical infirmary for poor patients gratis, one Monday a month.

In the year 1515 Saint Côme was converted by government decree into a surgical college. This was in part demolished in the year V. of the Republic, and the church was destroyed in 1836, except the Amphitheatre of Surgery, which in time became the Dupuytren museum.

Chapter viii. of the Introduction to Malgaigne's complete works of Ambroise Paré, Paris, 1840, is entitled "Transformation of the Confrérie of Saint Côme into a college — Reception of Ambroise Paré." The account of this is interesting enough to be read here:—

"... the college had an immense interest to attach to itself Ambroise Paré, who was in so great

favor with the king; in so great renown among the people and the nobility. In spite of the statutes which required that the candidate should know Latin; in spite of the edict of 1544 which had insisted on this condition; more especially in spite of a difficulty more formidable than all the rest, the necessity of making him undergo his examination in Latin, everything was agreed upon and arranged in advance; they decreed to him, perhaps an unheard-of thing, the honors of a gratuitous reception; and he demanded in consequence to be admitted to the examinations the 18th of August, 1554; he was named Bachelor the 23rd of the same month, licensed the 8th of October, and took the bonnet de maître the 18th of December, 'in templo D. D. Cosmæ et Damiani supra fontes.'"

Having landed the great Ambroise Paré safely among the chirurgiens de longue robe, in the bosom of the college of Saint Côme, we can now understand what M. Le Paulmier says of this robe:—

"It was this long robe that Ambroise Paré wore after his affiliation to Saint Côme,—as did also Hérard,—and, for that matter, most of those who figure in the "Index Funereus" since Francis I. It was the official costume, which had no necessary relation with any other function; François Hérard himself had no title at court. This will explain (*a propos* of your question about Juvenay, who himself wore one) why mention is made of surgeons of the long robe—togatorum."

Let me say that this allusion to Juvenay refers to one M. Stephants Juvenay whose name is in the

"Index Funereus," and about whom I inquired of Dr. Le Paulmier, because he is especially mentioned as "embracing in himself the remains of the splendor of the school of the surgeons of the long robe." "Splendoris Chirurgorum Togatorum scholæ reliquias in se complectens."

I will add here that Dr. Le Paulmier quite understood that the picture about which he has so kindly interested himself, belonged to the Society.

In conclusion, he says:—

"I hope that I have replied to your questions in a satisfactory manner. If some point yet remains obscure, I place myself at your disposition. At all events it is perfectly clear, that

"1. The painted portrait of which you have sent me the photograph is that of F. Hérard, painted by Siere.

"2. The two engravings of the Paris Library were made by Cossin after this portrait.

"3. That the robe with which this personage is invested, as well as his collar, are of the second half of the 17th century, and such as surgeons then wore (tels que les portaient alors, les chirurgiens)."

M. Le Paulmier has kindly volunteered to send me the engraving of Hérard, if a copy should ever turn up. In the meantime I requested Adolphe Braun & Cie. to make a photographic facsimile of the engraving before the letter, which has the written inscription concerning Hérard, and also of the leaves of the "Index Funereus" which refer to the Hérards. Of this I will ask the acceptance of this Society.

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nus, Phlebotomes peritiâ distinctus. Obiit anno 1668.

M. Paulus ANAUD, pater, Gratianopolites. Obiit 4. Julii anni 1669.

M. Ludovicus CHAPERON, Parisiensis. Obiit 10. Sept. anni 1669.

M. Jacobus LE LARCE, Picardus, Chirurgus eximius, Consultor famulus, & in lue curanda expertissimus; vir insuper probitatis plenus & bonæ cum sociis consuetudinis. Obiit diutissimus 3. Apr. anni 1670.

Filium habuit natu majorem Doctorem Medicum Parisiensem præstantissimum; Mariæ Franciscæ à Sabaudis Nemorosensis, Alphonse V. Lusitanæ Regis primum, deinde D. Petri Regentis, & postea fratris Alphonse Successoris, successivè conjugis Archiatrum, cui Officiorum Regiæ prætorum, Christi Regius Ordo præmiu fuit.

M. Joannes CHAILLOU, Parisiensis. Obiit 27. Maii anni 1670.

M. Franciscus FREMIN, Parisiensis, Ant. Præf. venarum sectionem cum magnâ famâ peregit. Obiit 31. Maii anni 1670.

M. Franciscus HERARD, filius, Parisiensis. Obiit juvenis 16. Julii anni 1673.

M. Stephanus JUVENAY, Parisiensis, splendoris Chirurgorum Togatorum scholæ reliquias in se complectens, linguarum Græcæ, Latine & vernaculæ æquè peritus, sapientiâ conspicuus, insignem probitatem, eloquio potens. Quoties Societatis missis etiam palam diebus occasionem illi fuit

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M. Petrus BRONSARD, Andegavensis. Obiit 4. Jan. anni 1683.

M. Franciscus MARCEZ, Obiit 5. Feb. anni 1683.

M. Petrus DE LEURVE, Parisiensis, præcedentis fratris, Ant. Præf. Chir. Togatus, in lue curanda famam obtinuerat. Obiit 5. Feb. anni 1683.

M. Petrus CLAVIER, Parisiensis, in Arte peritissimus, secundæ Cohortis Sclopeticorum excubie Regiæ Chir. Major. Obiit 4. Nov. anni 1683.

M. Dionysius FOURNIER, Laniacus, Chirurgicæ Protheseos peritus, plurimum organorum inventor & fabricator, difficultiorum curationum audax tentator, Tractatus plures de corporis humani structura, de ossium morbis, ac præsertim de fracturis & luxationibus organorum ope, redcendis edidit. Quædam præterea de partium præxi typis mandavit. Obiit 25. Nov. anni 1683.

* M. Franciscus HERARD, pater, Parisiensis, vir spectata integritatis, insignis pietatis, & in Arte celeberrimus. Ex his fuit quorum effigies Ludovici Magni jussu æri incisa fuit, & inter virorum se regnante in Artibus Illustrum Icones inserta. Obiit 24. Decemb. anni 1683.

M. Thomas DEVMIER, Parisiensis, Ant. Præf. Obiit 17. Dec. anni 1683.

M. Martinus ROGER, Nobilis Lorrhaingus, & veteri Togatorum Collegio & idcirco