

**SOME MEMORANDA IN  
REGARD TO WILLIAM  
HARVEY, M.D.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649295401

Some Memoranda in Regard to William Harvey, M.D. by S. Weir Mitchell

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**S. WEIR MITCHELL**

**SOME MEMORANDA IN  
REGARD TO WILLIAM  
HARVEY, M.D.**



SOME MEMORANDA

IN REGARD TO

WILLIAM HARVEY, M. D.

BY  
S. WEIR MITCHELL

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

NEW YORK

1907

100-12-1

SOME MEMORANDA IN REGARD TO  
WILLIAM HARVEY, M.D.

It would seem unlikely that any new material of interest concerning Harvey should turn up in America. I have, however, been so fortunate as to have become the possessor of a manuscript in his handwriting which is in itself interesting and because of its surroundings still more so.

The need to verify the specimen I possess, led me to inquire what other manuscripts of his are known to exist. As I find elsewhere no single complete statement in regard to his autographs, letters and lecture notes, etc., I may spare others a search for these relics of the great physiologist by giving a list of them preparatory to describing the manuscript I was so happy as to acquire.

Dr. D'Arcy Power thinks the earliest autograph of Harvey may be found at Padua, where he studied medicine from 1598 to 1602, but as yet no success has attended search in the Paduan archives, and no scrap of his writing is known to exist up to the date of his notes for the Lumleian Lectures in 1616. These were reproduced in autotype by the Royal College of Physicians in 1886. In the Sloan MS. Collection in the British Museum there is a manuscript of the later Lumleian Lectures which Harvey gave in 1627. These deal with the muscles. The only account of these later lectures is to be found in George Paget's too brief notice, and in D'Arcy Power's quotations<sup>1</sup> illustrative of the humorous imagina-

<sup>1</sup> William Harvey—D'Arcy Power, page 68.

tion which illumines so many of these dry anatomical details. Thus Harvey notes, to be expanded no doubt for his class, "An cerebrum, master" (of the ship); "Spina—his mate; Musculi, sailors; Nervi, Boatswain who summons the crew to work." Surely this was a mind which knew how to play cleverly and wisely with illustrative jests—a pity we should not have all of it.

Among the quotations made by Paget is one which is curious: "Risus sardonicus"; and below it "Uncle Will Halse," who is to be remembered and used as an example in the family of the Risus in question. It is rather exasperating not to know more of Uncle Halse and this death grin. I could find no Uncle Halse in the Harvey genealogy. I suspect that Paget, who found Harvey's script difficult, mistook Halke, the family name of Harvey's mother, for Halse.

Between the dates of the two sets of lecture notes we find, in 1624, on a medical certificate in regard to the health of Sir William Sands, the signature: "Will: Harvey." See State Papers, Public Record Office, Domestic Series, Charles I, Vol. XLVII, No. 9.

With a probable date of 1634 there is an autograph letter, presumably to Lord Dorchester, (reproduced in autotype by E. H. Aveling, *Memorials of Harvey*, London, 1875), signed Will Harvey, without the colon between Will and Harvey seen in the signature on the certificate.

With the date of 1637 we find a certificate concerning the illness of Sir Thomas Thynne, signed Will. Harvey, with a period between the two names. See State Papers, Domestic Series, Charles I, Vol. CCCLXIII, No. 8.

1640. In Goulston's Latin translation of "Galen Opuscula Varia" are thirty-five lines in Harvey's writing on a fly leaf, and scattered remarks on the margins of the book. Since the fuller account of these interesting notes is to be found only in a non-medical journal, I quote Dr. Norman Moore's statement of his discovery of these precious comments, but regret to find nowhere a complete copy of this specimen of Harvey's critical thought.

"Having been a member of the committee appointed in 1885 by the College of Physicians to supervise the publication of the 'Prelectiones Anatomiae Universalis,' I had the pleasure of examining every word of the writing with Mr. Edward Scott of the British Museum, to whom the arduous task of transcribing Harvey's crabbed manuscript was entrusted, and by whom it was executed with astonishing precision and expedition. Having thus studied Harvey's handwriting under the able tuition of Mr. Scott, I was sufficiently acquainted with it to recognize as Harvey's thirty-five lines written on a blank page at the end of a copy of Goulston's 'Opuscula Varia' of Galen, into which I had occasion to look in the British Museum. The book evidently belonged to Harvey, who had underlined and annotated many passages. The peculiar conjoined W.H. which he was accustomed to prefix or affix to original notes, which Sir George Paget describes in his account of the manuscript notes on the muscles, and which occurs again in the 'Prelectiones Anatomiae Universalis,' appears in several places



on the margins of the pages of this Galen, amongst others on pp. 101, 234, 235, 236, 239, 246. It is perhaps unnecessary with this autograph initial signature to describe other peculiarities which, to those acquainted with Harvey's hand, can be of little weight; but an X for example, which precisely resembles that so used in the 'Prelectiones' is to be seen in the Galen, and also a similar N.B. The date of the 'Prelectiones' is 1616, and that of the 'De Musculis' 1627, while these notes of Galen were made after 1640, thus showing that Harvey's manuscripts have the same peculiarities throughout his life.

This edition, 'Claudii Galeni Pergameni Opuscula Varia,' consists of Greek texts with Latin translation printed in parallel columns, and was the work of Dr. Theodore Goulston, a learned Fellow of the College of Physicians, the founder of the Goulstonian Lectures still delivered every year at the College in accordance with the terms of the founder's will. Goulston lived in the same parish as Harvey, that of St. Martin, Ludgate, and they were, of course, as Fellows of the College of Physicians, acquainted with one another. Goulston died in 1632, and this Galen was published in 1640 by his friend Thomas Gataker. The British Museum copy has been rebacked, but is otherwise in the binding of its period, with a stamped gold pattern in the middle, a border fleury at the corners, and a plain linear border at the outermost part of each side. There is a pattern on the edges of the sides, and the leaves are gilt.

A copy of the book, also in contemporary binding, which is in the Library of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, has a leather binding without any gilding, so that Harvey's may have been a presentation copy.

Many passages and words are underlined, and the frequent corresponding notes, often of only a single word, in the margin prove that the ink lines were made by Harvey. He has invariably annotated the Latin, and the Greek columns are without marks throughout.

The first work is Galen's 'Exhortatio ad Medicinam et Artes,' and this contains underlined passages in six of its nine chapters. Three on athletes and their qualities are not annotated. One example of the notes may be given. In the margin of Chapter I, Harvey has written 'Rationali,' and has underlined the words printed in italics: 'Has igitur ob causas, quanquam reliquis etiam animantibus haud de est Ratio, tamen *homo solus ob eminentiam, qua cæteris præstat, Rationalis vocatur.*'

Now and then a fresh illustration of Galen's sentiments occurs to Harvey. Learning, says Galen, is to be preferred to rank, which is only of value in its own country, 'nobilitatem, qua tantopere turgent haud absimilem civitatum esse nummis, qui apud eos valent, qui instituerunt; apud alios, quasi adulterini repudiantur.' The italics mark Harvey's underlining; and in the margin, apparently as an example of artificial exterior elevation as opposed to genuine exaltation of worth of learning, he has written 'wooden leggs.'

The second treatise is 'Quod Optimus Medicus idem

et Philosophus,' and has but few notes. The third, 'De Sectis ad Tyrones,' is noted throughout; but the fourth, 'De Optima Secta,' has very few marks of having interested the reader. The remaining treatises, 'De Cognoscendis et Corrigendis cujusque Animi Perturbationibus,' 'De Dignoscendis et Corrigendis cujusque Animi Erratis,' and 'Quod Animi mores sequantur Temperamentum Corporis,' are marked, or have marginal notes of one or more words on almost every page. I hope in the St. Bartholomew's Reports to publish a full account of his marginal annotations."

The thirty-five lines in Harvey's hand on the terminal blank page are references to the subjects treated on certain pages of the book.

1641. In the "Album Amicorum" of Philip de Glarges, Harvey wrote:

"Dei laboribus omnia vendunt nobilissimo juveni medico stat Phillip de Glarges amicitia ergo libenter scripsit.

GUL: HARVEIUS."

Anglus med. Reg. et anatomiz professor Londin: May 8, A.D. 1641, page 24, British Museum MSS., Nos. 23-105.

This Glarges must have been one of the earliest of the troublesome breed of autograph collectors. They have multiplied of later years.

<sup>1</sup> Athenæum, October, 1888, by Norman Moore, M.D. Unfortunately Dr. Norman Moore has not as yet fulfilled his intention.