CHRIST THE PHYSICIAN.

COMPILED FROM MATERIAL COLLECTED BY EDWARD KREMERS.

Dr. Edward Kremers, professor of chemistry at the University of Wisconsin, has called our attention to a number of interesting old pictures he has collected in Europe, which represent Christ as an apothecary furnishing remedies to suffering mankind.

The idea of Christ as a physician is more usual, yet artistic representations of this notion are not so common as might be expected. Co-workers with Dr. Kremers in this line are Dr. C. E. Daniels of Amsterdam, and Dr. Hermann Peters, of Hanover. All three, Kremers, Daniels and Peters, have done original research work, and we here present extracts from their writings together with all the most pertinent illustrations.

By way of introduction, we will state that the idea of the Saviour as a healer was prominent in primitive Christianity. Vestiges of it are still to be found in the New Testament. Jesus is reported to have healed all sorts of diseases and even to have raised the dead by divine power in much the same way as we to-day have Faith Cure and Christian Science.

This ideal of the Saviour as a healer of bodily diseases is a continuation of a pre-Christian hope. In ancient Greece Æsculapius was worshiped as the god of physicians and was himself regarded as a divine healer. His temples were utilized as sanitariums where people slept to awaken cured of their ailments, and some were likewise centers of medical practice.

We know of a group of people called Therapeutes or “healers,” but the description which Philo gives of them simply represents them as a religious sect, and not as healers in the sense of curing bodily diseases.

The idea of comparing a saviour to a healer is not limited to the Western world, but prevails also in the Orient. Buddha is called “the great physician” and to some extent we may say that he was
also regarded as an apothecary, for we read that he prepared simples for the sick.\(^1\)

The oldest representations of Christ as a physician known to the authorities above cited, are two Dutch woodcuts. One shows Christ holding up a urinal flask. In the other he is hanging out his professional sign as a physician.\(^2\)

It is possible, or rather probable, that Heinrich Solde of Brunswick, a man who wrote under the pseudonym Henricius Cordus, magister of a medical school at Erfurt and professor at Marburg, later at Bremen, saw these or similar pictures and that they inspired him to write his satirical verses on the three faces of the physician. He thereby imparts another interpretation to the conception of Christ as a physician, for he inverts the position and speaks of the physician as Christ. He expresses the troubles of a physician's life by showing that when the physician is called he is an angel; when

\(^1\) Buddha's healing is incidental. See, for instance, The Gospel of Buddha. Chapters LXIV, LXX, and LXXXIV.

\(^2\) The Dutch inscriptions as quoted by Dr. Daniels in his series "Docteurs et Malades," in Janus, Archives internationales pour l'histoire de la medicine et la géographie médicale, 1900, p. 84, read as follows:

1. "Doctor Jhesus die meester principael
   Staet en siet in den orinael."

2. "Doctor Jhs hancet wt sinen orinael
   Tooghede datti meester es principael."
the patient is improved the one who performed the miracle becomes
a god, but when he presents the bill for his services he is a devil.
These verses were published in 1520 at Erfurt under the title Epigrammata, and were reprinted in 1892.

Additional epigrams appeared in 1525 and after his death in 1535 all were collected under the title Enricii Cordi Epigrammatum Libri XIII. We quote from them the following lines (Janus, loc. cit., p. 85):

"Tres medicus facies habet: unam quando rogatur
'Angelica.' Mox est cum juvat esse 'Deus.'
Post, ubi curato poscit sua praemia morbo,
Horridus appareat terribilisque 'Satan.'"

Professor Daniels has come across an old English verse which is a literal translation of this Latin verse of Solde (loc. cit., 85):

"Three faces the Phisition hath: first as an Angell he,
When he is saught: next when he helpes, a Goode he semes to be.
And last of all, when he hath made the sicke deseased well,
And askes his guerdon, then he semes, an ongly Fiend of hell."

A German rendering of the same epigram has been published by Dr. Sepp in a book entitled Frustula (Augsburg, 1890). Dr. Sepp does not give any reference of his source and simply calls it, "An Ancient Rhyme." Dr. Daniels suggests that it may have been the original of Solde's verse (loc. cit., p. 106):

"Der Doktor is ein weiser Rat,
Derselbe drei Gesichter hat;
Das eines Engel: Patient
Ersehnt, dass er die Krankheit wend';
Hilft er den Kranken aus der Not,
Verehrt man ihn wie einen Gott;
Kommt er um den verdienten Lohn,
Hält man ihn für den Teufel schon."

In the Print-Cabinets of the National Libraries of Paris and Berlin there exists the portrait (1556) of a Nuremberg surgeon, "Jacob Baumann, Wundarzt, Seines alters Im XXXVI Jar," attributed to Vergil Solis, which bears as an inscription another German version of the same idea:

"Der Arzt dem kranncken geordnet ist
Der darff keins artzts dem nichts gebrist,
Ein artzt aber drei angesicht hat.
Engelisch: so er dem kranncken rhat.

*In Lateinische Litteraturdenkmäler des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts.
So sich bessert des kranncken noth,
So sieht der artzt gleich wie ein Gott.
Wann nun der artzt umb lohn anspricht
Hat er ein Teufflisch angesicht."

A French verse, which for all we know may be as old or even older than the German and Latin, has been published by Dr. Edmond Dupouy in his pretty book Medicine et mœurs de l'ancienne Rome d'après les poètes latins (Paris, 1891):

"Le malade est partout un être bien étrange;  
S'il appelle un docteur tout d'abord c'est un ange;  
S'il guérit, c'est un dieu; plus tard, chose incroyable!  
S'il aperçoit la note à payer, c'est un diable."

In the Regimen Scholae Salernitanae the same idea is expressed more freely in the medieval style of Latin poetry (loc. cit., p. 110):

"Dum ægroto visitatur,  
Dum processus ventilatur,  
Cura, te accipere.  
Nam ægroto restituto  
Et processu absoluto  
Nemo curat solvere."

["While the sick you visit often,  
While his grievous pain you soften,  
Take heed that he pays to-day;  
For when once he is recovered  
And from dire attack delivered  
No one then will care to pay."—pov.]

The same thing is indicated in the prints of Goltzius, Gelle and Van Vianen in the words, dum dolet, accipe, and Dr. Gérard Goris, in his Medicina Contempta (1700) Chapter XI, "Taedia Medicorum," says also Accipe cum dolet, post curam medicus olet; "Take your fee while the patient is suffering, for after he is cured the doctor becomes offensive."

We quote from the same source (ibid. 110) a few proverbs which follow the same line of thought. A 17th century Scotch saying reads, "You shall take your fee whilst the tear is in the ee."

Wander's Deutsches Sprichwörterbuch, s. v. "sählen," quotes the old adage "Lasst euch zählen, wenn sie quelen." ["See you're paid while they're afraid."]

Humanity is always the same. Is it not Tolstoy who tells us that charity and gratitude are never seen together here below?

* * *

The prints of Hendrik Goltzius referred to above are known to collectors. We here reproduce the full series of them explained
by Dr. C. E. Daniels in the same article in *Janus*, V, 22-24 as follows in an English translation:

"Hendrik Goltzius, the celebrated designer, engraver and painter, published a series of four prints in 1587, which represent the relation of the physician to his patient in the different stages of disease, in the four different degrees of severity of the illness. They are founded on fact, both realistic and allegorical, and above all are

true;—so true that after three centuries have passed, they remain true to life. This work might have been conceived to-day; the conception is agreeable and the execution most artistic. In four pictures the life of the physician is passed in review as it was in the time of Goltzius, as it is in 1900, and as it doubtless will continue to be for some centuries to come. It might be called a history of medical practice presented in the most objective form.
"Each of the four prints\(^4\) represents two apartments separated by a large column which reaches to the top of the picture, and against which a colossal figure is leaning to which I shall again revert. At the left we see in each case the same sleeping-room with its bed and other furniture. The patient is in bed in the first two prints; in the third he is seated in an arm-chair before the fire, and in the last he is dressed for the street. The wife of the patient and other members of the family are always present in the room.

\(^4\) Height including margin is 188 mm; without margin, 176 mm. Width including margin is 231 mm; without margin 228 mm.
head; in the third the man with the broken leg is trying to walk on crutches; and in the fourth both he and his wife are cured and they dance together before the doctor who has come to see them. Let us not forget to mention that objects used in medicine and surgery are grouped in the foreground on each side of the picture. These give an idea of the resources of this nature which were in use in the days of the engraver.

"Passing to the gigantic figure in the center of each print, we notice that in the first it is a Christ, examining a flask of urine which he holds in his right hand, and holding in the left two cauterizing irons, together with a portable furnace at which they may be heated. It is easy to guess by the anxious attitude of those present while the physician close by the bedside is feeling the pulse of the patient, that the sick man's condition is very serious. Under the feet of the Christ we read Ο ΘΕΟΣ [the god] and the following distichs at the right and left:

"Dum nigris ægrum prope Mors circumvolat alis,
Funestanque aciem iam fera iamque parat,
Tum me promissis beat et domus omnis adorat,
Tum vocat immensum me venerata DEUM.

[While Death with sombre wings the sick man hovers o'er,
And straightway for his end prepares his direful scythe,
Then am I blessed with pledges and adored by all,
Then would they call me great, and praise me as a god.—pav.]

"Below this is given the Dutch translation and the same arrangement is followed in the four prints.

"The large figure in the second print represents an angel holding a goblet in one hand and a spatula in the other. Below is written H ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ XΕΙΡ [the hand of God], and the verses,

"Paulum ubi convaluit: paulum de numine nostro
Cessit, et in nostris auribus ista sonant:
Tu coelo nobis demissus es ANGELUS alto,
Praemia quae vestri et quanta laboris erunt.

[When some of health he has regained, then something too
Of sway divine we lose; but now we hear:
'An angel from Heaven's heights thou'rt sent to us,
And great shall be thy boon as great thy labor is.'—pav.]

"The allegorical figure of the third print is a man richly clad in cap and gown. In his right hand he holds a book and in his left a pair of opened shears upon which hangs a piece of bandage or plaster. Below stands Homer's flattering phrase on physicians,
IATROΣ ΠΟΛΑΩΝ ΑΝΤΑΞΙΟΣ ΑΛΛΩΝ (one doctor is worth as much as many other men) and the verses:

"Iamque Machaonia magis et magis arte levatus,
Cum sedet ante focum, progrediturve tripes,
O HOMO non frustra tantos subiisse labores
Nosces; quod restat tu modo tolle malum.

[When more recovered now through Machaonian skill
He sits before his hearth or walks forth with his staff,
Then, "Not in vain, great Man, hast learned much to endure,
It but remaineth now that thou shalt cure our ills."—rov.]

THE PHYSICIAN AS A MAN OF FAME.

By Goltzius (1587). From Janus, V, 22-23.

"Finally, the fourth print shows an almost nude figure against the central pillar, with powerful muscles, asses' ears, horns, goat's beard and wings. Around his waist hangs a leather surgeon's case not unlike the sheath of a butcher's knife. A small basket hangs
above his right hip, by a cord slung over his left shoulder. This unengaging personage advances in a theatrical pose, holding out his empty hands. The Greek inscription is: ΥΒΠΙΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΙΓΗ ΑΝΤΙ ΣΩΣΤΡΩΝ (insolence and blows for fees) and the Latin verses are:

THE PHYSICIAN AS SATAN.

By Goltzius (1587). From Janus, V, 22-23.

"Ast ego si penitus iam sanum praeemia poscam, Ille Deus pridem mox CACODAEMON ero. Cautior exemplo tu dum dolet accipe nostro Qui Medicae exerces graviter artis opus.

[But if when wholly cured I ask for pay, Then I who was a god, a very Devil am. More cautious, thou who practicest the art to heal Mayst learn from me thy fee to ask ere pain has fled.—rov.]
THE PHYSICIAN AS CHRIST.
By Gelle (1609). From Janus, V, 24-25.

THE PHYSICIAN AS CHRIST.
By Horemans (1752). From Janus, V, facing p. 80.
"In order to render still clearer the sage advice which he offered physicians by means of his engraving, the artist added some verses in Dutch which mean: 'Ye masters, and whosoever ye may be who apply yourselves to the noble art of healing, give heed to the warn-

ing which I set before your eyes. It is while people are in travail that they must be delivered. To "Help me," answer "Give me." Let the reasons why they should pay you be most emphatic.'

"In this manner did Goltzius, who was himself in poor health,
give a lesson to his contemporaries with regard to their ingratitude for the medical care they received."

Goltzius has found imitators in Johannes Gelle and Jan van Vianen. Their ideas are the same and their style of painting may be seen from the reproduction of the first picture of the corresponding series of each, the physician as Christ, the former bearing the date 1609, the latter about 1700. We shall simply mention, in passing, an anonymous Dutch master of about 1620 who painted such a series, but the pictures as published in *Janus* (ibid. between pp. 26 and 27) are too dark to reproduce well. Jan Horemans (1752) has painted a similar series in a more modern style.