

Consilium 45

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Bernardina Panimolla, with a double wound having been received in the right eye by pincers penetrating to the cornea, and from there the albugineous humor having flowed out completely, profoundly loses sight, which in the space of a few days upon the prayer of B. Faelix from Cantalicius, and with the oil of his lamp having been applied, she recovers fully, and more perfect than before.

SUMMARY

1. Scars very greatly impede the vision of the eyes.
2. Vision is not able to occur without the assistance of the aqueous, or the aforesaid albugineous humor.
3. Vision disappears entirely due to the scar and to the wrinkling of the membrane of the cornea.
4. In the elderly, vision is impaired due to the wrinkling of the Cornea.
5. Afflictions of the eyes are always chronic, and why.
6. The loss of the Aqueous Humor: at times it may be lost, however, it is only able to happen naturally over the longest period of time.
7. A small section merely describes the difficulty and rarity of the thing.
8. That which hardly ever happens, is however feasible, granted, with difficulty.
9. It is easier to empty those things that have been filled, than to refill those that have been emptied.
10. Medicine is the application of those things which are lacking and the removal of those which are superfluous.
11. A scarred part is never able to return to its initial state by way of nature.

For two reasons, Most Eminent Lords, this healing is to be judged miraculous; first, from the standpoint of the inability of the sick part itself toward recovering health, second, from the standpoint of the speed of the healing. And as long as a very great many things come together, conclusively proving the aforesaid inability.

First, the weakness, as if innate in the part itself, which the sick girl was suffering, as she herself reports, who is the first witness above, for she had contracted this weakness from the age of five years from pox, which had left a scar on the eye itself (as also occurs in others and experience shows and Merc. notes [l.(50).1. *De morbis Pueritiae*, ch. c.a)), the same woman above reports that the same vestiges of this still are observed; moreover, doctors know, and Galen testifies (Gal. [50.1. de symt. c. caus. c.

2. et Par. suae Chirur. I. 22. c. 13.]) that a scar of the membranes of the eyes themselves interferes with vision on account of contracted density. Therefore, this disability of the eye had passed as innate and habitual on account of such a great space of years, and for that reason was not able to be removed naturally.

Second, a drainage and loss of the aqueous or albugineous humor occurred, without the aid of which vision is not able to occur, because, since it is an essential part of the visual apparatus itself, it is necessary, as Andreas Laurentius demonstrates ([Anatom. lib. II. Quaestione 10. Ins.]), that, once it has been lost, vision also is lost totally. In the same way Laurentius testifies the same thing in the very same place, and all anatomists before and after him without exception.

Third, sores and a wrinkling of the said membrane of the cornea co-occurred on account of the outpouring of the aforementioned aqueous humor, which is enclosed within the said membrane, the sick girl herself even deposes about this wrinkling above 5. In these words, And I have heard from others that with said humor having moved toward the bare skin, the eye was collapsed, and I even saw myself in the mirror and from the scar and the wrinkling of the cornea it is necessary that sight disappears entirely; because the cornea has been made see-through, and transparent by nature, so that it might thus serve vision in a greater way ([Gal.lib.8. de usu par.c.6.Hieron. Fabric, de vis.org.part. 3. c.2. Joan. V.Vesling. in syntagm. Anat.c. 25.]) but both by the scars and by the wrinkling, it is rendered dense, and opaque, it is darkened, and it loses transparency, as happens in the elderly, in whom on account of even a simple wrinkling of this membrane, vision becomes increasingly more dull over time. [Galen. lib 10. de usu part.c.5. Dan. Sen.lib.I. pract. 3. sect. 2. cap. 16.]

Moreover, from the second standpoint, namely, from the speed of the healing; this restoration of vision does not appear any less miraculous, since, in addition to the fact that afflictions of the eyes are always chronic due to their unceasing dripping due to the emptiness of the source, and on account of the thinness of the visual fluids, and the purity, due to which easily there is a coursing of blood towards them, indeed also incurable, (Mercur [de aff. ocul, cap.1])

This defect especially, that is, the outpouring and destruction of the aqueous humor, may sometimes, but rarely, be repairable, as Merc. testifies ([de Affect.ocul.c.5 & ex plurium D,D. Auctoritate Daniel. Sennert. ubi supr.c.34.]). Still, it is the truth, that not except over the longest interval of time, does it turn out to be repaired through the regeneration of that same lost humor. Thus as Galen himself explains ([lib. 1. desympt. caus. cap. 12. prope finem]), a case of the restoration of vision as something incredible, after the destruction of the aforesaid aqueous Humor, in these words: "Moreover, I

divulge an incredible thing we have not yet seen to be accustomed to occur, in a boy who had who had been pierced by a stick in the pupil.

For immediately when the liquid humor had flowed out, then the pupil itself had been rendered smaller, then the whole cornea had appeared rather dark; in addition, having been healed, it saw correctly thereafter, granted, once the humor which had flowed out had gradually been re-collected there.”

From these words, it is clear that the Aqueous humor, having been lost, from time to time may be regenerated, but quite infrequently. However, this cannot occur except over a long period of time and gradually, as Galenus has said. Because also among other doctors, it is very strongly agreed, these stating that this liquid, if lost, totally ruins sight and can scarcely be regenerated (Citation: Andr-Laurent. Anatom, lib. II quaestione 8.). For that small section simply shows the difficulty and rarity of effecting this. For, granted, what rarely occurs, is nevertheless feasible, though it be always with great difficulty. (citation: Alberic, in diction in vece (vix) Abb. in cap.contracto, de Cognat., spirit n. 13.)

Thus diseases which are not usually healed, are indeed sometimes healed, however with great difficulty, and not without a long passage of time. And this is very much so in our case, in which beyond the nature of the illness itself attacking the vision, it was further rendered much more difficult to cure, because it was due to emptying, for vision had been lost on account of the outpouring of the Aqueous Humor. So that it might therefore be recovered, it was necessary to take away the cause of emptying through a new regeneration of that same humor, which was very difficult. For as from Galen (Mercur. [De Oculo, affect cap.5]), it is easier to consume excess humidity than to restore and repair deficient humidity, and it is obvious that it is easier to empty that which has been filled, than to fill that which has been emptied.

Therefore, a period of a very long time was required for this healing should it have occurred naturally due to the aforesaid causes. And it was not possible for that liquid to be regenerated naturally in the space of only three days and for sight to return to its natural perfection. Since, if the space of three days would have been too brief for evacuating the failing liquids, how much more brief would that same space of three days be for regenerating the missing liquid so necessary for vision. If the latter is, without a doubt, much more difficult than the former, and since this liquid was so quickly regenerated, then this work cannot be attributed to Nature, but only to a supernatural cause and to divine power.

The only thing that remains to be further demonstrated is that vision was restored without any cure from natural remedies; for those things which were applied by the

surgeon not only did not contribute to the restoration of the vision, but were completely contrary to it, for the surgeon applied a defensive drug to the eye to prevent inflammation, as the sick girl herself confesses above 7. Medications of this sort, however, are repellent and cold and astringent, ([Gal. lib. 6. de comp. Med. sec. loc. cap. 1]) yet cold, styptic and astringent things cause swelling, hence they were more effective in rendering her wrinkling cornea membrane darker, due to which which vision was more greatly obscured, with the minimal transparency of the Cornea having been totally lost, if any of it had remained.

Nor (does) that which is countered by his Most Excellent Lord, Promoter of the Faith contradict these things at all; to wit: that since many other cures had gone before and especially the purging of the body, it was obvious that the eye recovered vision naturally since it is sometimes shown that from simple purging or just by the withdrawal of some significant pain afflicting the sufferer, once sleep has been restored, some who had lost vision entirely had recovered it and in our region there are some cases very similar to this one in which for those afflicted by a wound with all the aqueous humor having leaked out and vision having been lost entirely due to this, it has returned to its pristine state by way of purgings with the regeneration of that humor and in addition to the case brought forward by Galen (there are) cases to be observed told by Benivenius, Langius, Columbus, Paraeus and Coiterius. Indeed we ourselves, so that we may support the truth, have seen two men who tried to extinguish (a fire) raging in fields and woods and from the great heat they lost their vision entirely, but recuperated it fully many days later with the aqueous humor having regenerated in the mean time, which had been as if deeply absorbed by the excessive heat.

But these things are less pertinent since, firstly, it is certain that in our patient, if any medications were brought into use, they pertained to the cleansing of the whole body, not, indeed, to the loss of sight, and thus, they were not be able in any way to affect blindness. Secondly, whether the purging of the body be spontaneous or brought about artificially, then it is able to have an effect on blindnesses since blindness has crept in from some rushing of fluids to the eyes themselves and from too great a filling of the body, and especially, of the head. Yet in our case, when the cause of blindness was an emptying having been created by the outflow of the aqueous humor, it is not the case that the cleaning could bring whatever use-- nay, on the contrary--it is such that it might harm in an amazing way, with the liquids having been all the more destroyed through this, for the cure did not depend upon the removal of the fluid having flowed out, but on the restoration of the lost liquid. Therefore, since medicine is nothing other than addition and removal [Hippocr lib. de flat. n 3 Galen in Introd c.6.], to wit, the addition of those things which are lacking and the removal of those (things) that are superfluous, in our

case certainly, the addition and regeneration of the missing liquid, not the removal of superfluous (liquid), was necessary for removing blindness.

It contradicts us much less that it has occurred sometimes naturally, that vision lost due to a violent headache or from long and uninterrupted wakefulness, had been regained only by the removal of the pain or with sleep having been regained, in the shortest space of time: for the reason is not the same, since the blindness in our case had had its origin neither from continual wakefulness nor from violent pain, but from the outpouring of the aqueous humor, and from the wound, sore, and wrinkling of the membrane of the cornea;

Therefore, in this situation it was not enough to regain sleep or to relieve pain with pain killers but it was necessary to restore the aqueous humor, to stabilize the wound, to heal the sore, and to flatten the wrinkling of the cornea, and to render it pure and transparent as before, and to restore it into its natural state. Yet who will venture to confirm, that Skill or Nature is able to accomplish all these things in the brief space of three days, which are not able to accomplished in the longest passage of years?

Therefore it seems that it must be concluded, that this healing was, without any doubt, miraculous, and to be placed among the miracles which defy obedience to Nature on the invocation of the divine Name. Especially since (also given that the regeneration of the Aqueous humor may occur naturally) in no way could an eye blinded in that manner return to its original state, except, as I have said, over a long period of many days, and months. But here a regeneration of the aqueous humor was not sufficient for vision to revert to its original state, but it was necessary to smooth out the wrinkled Cornea membrane.

But let us also freely grant these things, namely, that the aqueous humor could have been naturally regenerated in the space of three days, or even less, and from the generation thereof, the Cornea could be smoothed out again, with the wrinkles lost through swelling which the regenerated Aqueous humor might make, but the impairment arising from the scars—how, in the way of Nature, or with treatment of skill, could these be removed not even in the long turning of years, but of centuries?

For a part scarred can never return to the natural and pristine state, for it is dried up more from the scar, and it is thickened and contracts a callus, whence art, which always imitates nature, uses drying and astringent medications for inducing scars.

[Gal.I.1.Con.Med.per.gen.c.12& I.2(?) ejus c.21]

But these things harden and thicken, which effect is directly contrary to vision, which requires a pure, thin, and transparent instrument. Therefore, all these impairments, which were neither able to be removed by skill nor by nature, are quickly removed by Divine Power, and so that this might be clear to have emanated from the Divine Power himself and not from anywhere else. And it (divine power) intended this work to appear most perfect, just as a miracle should be, as I have said elsewhere (lib.4.quaest.Medico-Leg.tit.I.quaest...n.9).

Thence, due to the merits of this saint, God wished not only for the impairments to be removed, which had emerged anew due to the accident, but also those things which had diminished vision long before, so that he might restore her very vision free from all defect, and sharper than it was before the wound was inflicted.

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