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Abstract

A boy of 5 years, unable to breathe from smallpox and half dead, lying for a time, entrusted to B. Felix¹ and anointed by the oil of his lamp, on the spot sending forth a loud voice, comes back to life and is healed.

Outline

1. Smallpox², when cured and when deadly
2. The status of the disease as it is said
3. When people held by the smallpox should die
4. The smallpox besieged/beset not only external but even internal parts
5. The oil is against measles and smallpox³
6. The miracle shines forth quite clearly from what follows the healing itself.

1. Many things run together to demonstrate that the healing of this boy from every side was supernatural. When most obviously it exceeded the strength of nature itself altogether, so that it might be demonstrated conclusively, the path of the whole disease must be presented for consideration as it is seen before everything else, and its status, which was thus [Italian]. This boy was suffering with smallpox, and indeed of a vicious and malignant nature in that, because [the smallpox] had taken over the boy so badly, that he seemed about to die at once from the savageness of it [the smallpox], as the Witnesses #16, 17, and 18 up to the 20th there unanimously testify.

For smallpox of this type, except that it is of a malign nature, had beset the internal parts and especially the breathing parts [respiratory system], when the boy, as the same witnesses testify, he was not breathing any more [in Italian]. In this state of affairs, lack of breathing and suffocation overcame the boy and he is considered/held as dead, since he was lying without motion, without pulse and without respiration, as the same witnesses agreed concerning the same [i.e., the boy].

These things having been generally considered, it must be considered now especially from singular parts of a true story of this kind, and proven through suitable witnesses and first the nature of this disease must be examined, by which the boy was being held, which disease was of smallpox,, which is certainly a childhood disease, and generally safe, but which it has this harshness and viciousness joined with it, and generally it kills (lest I should say always⁴) Avic. *p. 4, tract. 4, cap. 6. Mercurial lib. 1,*

¹ perhaps Blessed Felix of Cantalice, a Capuchin Friar later canonized, who lived in the mid 1500s. H healed many sick people and is credited with bringing a child back from death.

² although the plural is in the Latin, for the sake of translation the singular is used.

³ *morbillus*, *i* –measles, and *variola, ae* - smallpox

⁴ this might be an example of “knock on wood”

de morbis puer cap 2. For then the smallpox puts on the nature of the plague, and just as the plague-like smallpox [varieties] are unsafe, so also Avic. *ibid* and Mercurial *loco. cit.* agree, and concerning similar plagues Forest. *1.6.obfer n. 4t* following should be seen. However, it is clear that these [types of] smallpox are such, because they are accompanied by such great symptoms, that from their vehemence/strength, the boy was sick to death, as it is clear from the narration of his history.

Now in truth the boy was spending time in a state of illness, when the unfortunate circumstances were in the greatest force and the greatest strength and they obtained their greatest increase, for this state of illness is spoken of Gal. *lib. 1, de Crisib. c. 3* and other places, **2** whence now from the order/progression of Nature the illness ought to kill the boy or make him sick; but in truth they were not weakening because not only were the unfortunate circumstances persisting, but new things arrived, and most deadly. Certainly complete lack of breathing and suffocation. Therefore naturally he was beginning to die, or perchance he died, since it is clear **3** then that those people die, who are oppressed by smallpox, when the aforementioned suffocation has arrived, for thus Avic. *loc. cit.* "And very many of those who die through smallpox die choked from angina⁵." Therefore in the way of Nature this boy not only ought to die from necessity but now by chance had already died, when all things had proceeded from the order/way of Nature, rather from the violence of the illness, and the final things had arrived and the most lethal symptoms, which are accustomed to overtake a dying man from the regulation of nature, and from the strength of the illness. For the boy was left without breath and suffocated, as is abundantly clear from the deposition of the witnesses.

Otherwise when things are having themselves thus, it must be seen, whether the boy, in that state of the Art/Skill [medicine], or by the help/power of Nature, or from a miracle was rather restored to life, and immediately it was certain that he had been helped by no guard of Art/Skill [medicine], for altogether from these [Art/Skill (medicine) and Nature] mention had been considered by the witnesses themselves, but we should grant also that Art/Skill [medicine] contrived something on behalf of the safety/health of the boy, for Art/Skill [medicine] was able to do nothing else in this, than to free the chest and the breathing parts [respiratory system] from the inflammation that had been contracted, and to clean out the bloody material emanating from the lesions themselves in some way, which he had been able to accomplish greatly through clearing his throat, or **4** perhaps through pushing out; for smallpox, as we have agreed, not only seizes the fleshy and external parts, but also all the internal parts and especially the lungs Avic. *ub supra*, Fernel *de Abdit. Rer. Caus. lib. 2. cap 12*, Paraeus *lib. 19 cap. 1*,

⁵ He uses the term *squinantia*, which is angina.

Dan. Sennert. *de morb. infan. par. 2, cap 2*. It was fitting, therefore, as I said, that these parts be freed from [separated from] bloody matter, so that the boy be restored to health, because he was lacking both many treatments and much time⁶, nor were any treatments applied, nor was much time spent on the healing, because he was healed and freed from very deadly suffocation, rather I say, from death itself, suddenly and in an instant, as from the process⁷ and clearly it is evident from the deposition/testimony of the witnesses; therefore altogether Art/Skill [medicine] is excluded from this instance of healing, since nothing was done, and altogether it [Art/Skill; medicine] would have been insufficient for the purpose of anything being brought about properly for the safety/health of the boy. But also Nature itself is excluded, because, when from its [Nature] prognosis the boy would have been healed, it was necessary, as in the same way, which we said about Art/Skill [medicine], his chest and lungs would have been freed from inflammation and the compressed burning and they would have been cleansed from the bloody matter of the lesions, or through his sputum, or through some other excretion, indeed no other [excretion] coming together existed than through sputum; which [items] if they should have succeeded, they were not able to succeed in time, as is clear; yet when the boy is healed by the removal of this inflammation and by the cleaning out of the bloody matter, and he revives in an instant, even Nature itself is altogether excluded from this work, which for every part remains beyond Nature and is miraculous.

However, it should come into consideration from a superabundance [of evidence] that this disease not only had been healed without any use of natural remedies, but also had been healed by remedy which in the way of nature would be either useless or contrary [to healing], for he is healed by the application and lamp oil of Blessed Felix himself; each one should consider what the remedy would have brought to a sick man suffocated by the power of the disease; but to this point this remedy was altogether contrary [to healing]; because [in general] oil is adverse to measles and smallpox, which is warned about by doctors, lest bodies be touched by oil of this type [general type of oil, not blessed oil], for oil increases the inflammation and the putrescence, and nevertheless here the applied [oil] calls back the boy from death, whence it certainly must be said, to the greater evidence of the miracle, no explanation of nature has been considered here since an adverse and noxious thing is applied, as was done other times in the Old and New Testament, says Vallesius⁸ *de sacr. Philosoph. Cap. 34*.

⁶ Idea: this took place in a very short time.

⁷ Process includes the line of reasoning used here.

⁸ Franciscus Vallesius, Spanish physician 1524-1592; discussed the first time deaf people were systematically taught to communicate.

Moreover, much more clearly the miracle shines forth from things following onto healing itself, for we have a boy doing so badly from the wound of his breathing instruments [respiratory system], that he neither breathed more deeply, nor was he able to remain longer in life, because either he was being suffocated, or already he had been suffocated, he is healed by the application of the oil on the spot [immediately], and he breathes again, and he shouts loudly, because in no way and altogether in no manner was he able to get to this place naturally, for how from such a state of disease and from so great a lesion on the spot [immediately] were parts [breathing instruments = respiratory system] able to return to the natural state, so that they were sufficient to form a voice? For it is agreed that the parts were in the highest degree of debility, and not only were they insufficient to form a voice, but insufficient to breath/respiration itself. Therefore these things proceed completely from a miracle, and not from the power of nature. Therefore, etc...