

NOUVEAU DICTIONNAIRE UNIVERSEL ET RAISONNÉ DE MÉDECINE, DE
CHIRURGIE, ET DE L'ART VÉTÉRINAIRE

'TRANSFUSION'

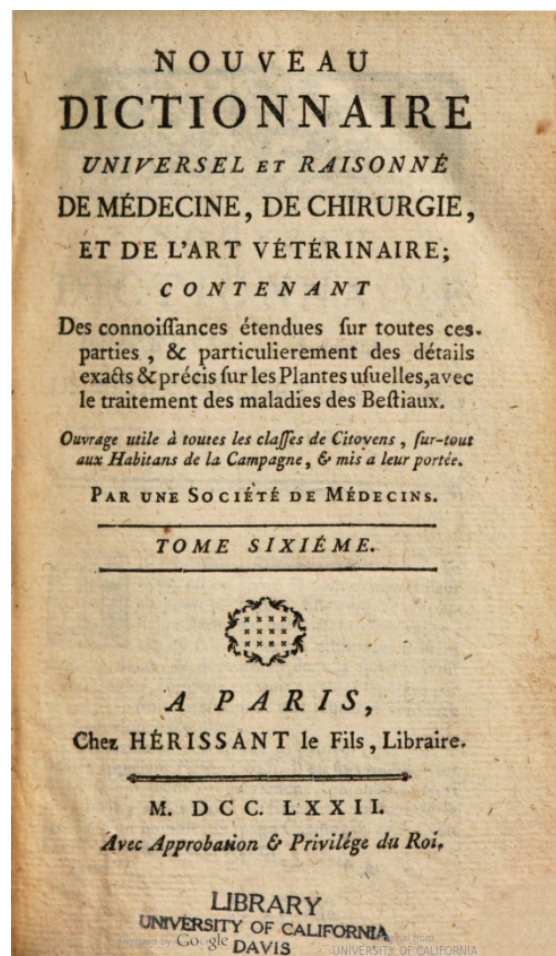
A TRANSLATION BY PHIL LEAROYD

The 'New universal and reasoned dictionary of medicine, surgery, and veterinary art', which has no identified editor or author*, published in Paris by Hérissant le Fils, in 1772 [reference: Volume 6, Section 65, Pages 296-298] contains a 'Transfusion' entry, a copy of which can be read or downloaded from the following sites:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175033704159&seq=308>

https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=LuFGFeK1UoQC&pg=PP9&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false

* The dictionary is identified to have been written 'Par une société de médecins' [By a company of doctors].



Title page: Nouveau dictionnaire universel et raisonné de médecine, de chirurgie, et de l'art vétérinaire – Volume 6 (1772)
(Image credit: hathitrust.org)

The entry starts by stating that it is thought that transfusion should be included within the dictionary because of the 'historical noise' associated with it; and it then very briefly identifies that its origin is argued to be either the 'last century' or 'very ancient' (i.e. Medea in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*). Interestingly, the entry then includes the statement 'foreigners give the French unequivocal testimony that it was by them that it was perfected', therefore still perpetuating the priority argument that had been seen between France and England in 1667.

The major part of the entry is a description, stated to have been provided by Mr. Emmerets, of performing the direct animal artery to human vein transfusion, in which it is noted that the (cannula) pipes may be of 'silver, ivory or any other thing!' It also notes that adverse effects are more noticeable if 'large doses' of blood are transfused and also that any beneficial effects were usually only temporary and possibly due to the body's reaction to the transfusion rather than to the blood itself. As expected, no mention is made of its use in treating patients suffering from haemorrhage or anaemia.

As this work was published in 1772, after transfusion had been effectively banned in Paris by the *Châtelet* in 1668, it is somewhat surprising that 'transfusion' is actually included within the dictionary at all. The entry does in fact include the comment 'condemned by law' and that transfusion has 'fallen into oblivion having been in vogue' and that the information relating to it has been saved by a 'few curious people who have taken care to preserve the works which gave it birth.' As such, it is an interesting historical document in its own right.

I have produced a translation of this paper from the original French into English to hopefully enable its content to be appreciated by a wider audience. Whilst I am obviously aware that instantaneous computer generated translation is available, this process however struggles with accurately reading the original text and interpreting specialist terminology, as well as producing a 'colloquial style' not always representative of the original text. In addition, an 'automatic translation' may either purposely or inadvertently alter the wording to 'make it read better' but in doing so there has to be an element of interpretation involving something on the lines of 'I believe that this is what the author is actually trying to say'. I want to avoid that as much as possible and try to present what the author actually wrote and as a result the reader may find that the English text does not 'flow' as well as it could. Although I have taken great care in accurately identifying the original text and producing a true representative translation of the author's original wording I cannot guarantee that this work does not contain 'translational errors' and the reader is recommended to check specific details against the original text.

I have reproduced the original paragraph settings and general layout as accurately as possible but would note that I found the text occasionally difficult to translate into readable / meaningful English.

TRANSFUSION. (Méd. Thérap. Chir.)

The history of transfusion has made too much noise not to say a few words about it here. It is a famous operation, which involves passing blood from the vessels of one animal immediately into those of another. There is little agreement on the origin of transfusion. Several authors fix the period in the last century, others trace it back to the most remote times, and pretend to find descriptions of it in very ancient works; they cite, among others, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which we find it described among the means used by Medea to rejuvenate *Æson*, and which she promised to employ for *Pelias*.

The manner of carrying out the transfusion has varied in different times and countries. In the beginning, the surgeons, who were unskilled in this operation, performed it with less precaution and skill, and consequently with more pain and danger than later. The habit of practicing it led to the successive imagining of new means of facilitating it, and of making it

less painful. Foreigners give the French unequivocal testimony that it was by them that it was perfected. The method followed in Paris is indeed very simple, and safe from all the inconveniences that could be reproached to others. Here is the way to carry out the operation as Mr. Emmerets has described it. The necessary instruments are two small pipes of silver, ivory, or any other thing, curved at the end which must be in the veins or arteries of the animals which are used for the transfusion, and on which it is made at the other end, these pipes are made in such a way as to be able to fit with accuracy and ease. With little difficulty in causing pain to the animals which must provide the blood that we want to transfuse into humans, the surgeon conveniently prepares their artery, he uncovers it through a longitudinal incision of two or three inches, separates it from the tegument, and binds it in two places an inch apart, taking care that the ligature which is on the side of the heart can easily be undone; then he opens the artery between the two ligatures, introduces one of the tubes into it, and holds it firmly attached: the animal thus prepared, the surgeon opens the patient's vein, he usually chooses one of those in the arm, lets his blood flow as much as the doctor judges appropriate, removes the ligature that is usually placed for bleeding above the opening, and places it below; he makes his second tube enter this vein, then adapts it to that which is placed in the artery of the animal, and carries away the ligature which stopped the movement of the blood; immediately it flows, finding an obstacle in the artery by the second ligation, it threads the pipe, and thus penetrates into the veins of the patient: its condition was judged by that of the animal which supplied the blood, and by the quantity that was believed to be transfused, at the time when it was necessary to cease the operation: the wound of the patient was closed with the compress and bandage as in the bleeding of the arm.

If one is instructed in the animal economy, the causes of the increase, decrease, and rigidity of old age, the usefulness of transfusion has been appreciated at its just value. It is seen that it is an operation indifferent to healthy animals, when it is done with circumspection, and that a very small quantity of foreign blood is introduced into their veins: but that it becomes bad and pernicious when it is done in large doses; that it must be accompanied by a more or less pressing danger when the sick are subjected to it, especially those who are weakened by the effect of their diseases, or by some other preceding cause, or who have some ill-disposed viscera. Besides, if it has sometimes seemed to produce relief, it is usually only temporary, and rather the effect of the general revolution in the engine, of the particular irritation in the blood system, of the increase in the intestinal movement of the blood occasioned by the new blood, as any other foreign body would do. Thus this operation, condemned by the laws, has fallen, for want of being agitated, into the oblivion in which it still remains today: scarcely would we know that it occupied the doctors, if some curious people had not taken care to preserve for us the works which it gave birth, when it was in vogue, and which, like all polemical writings, cease to be read and sought after as soon as the dispute is over.