

## Historical and Bibliographical Notes:

A SERIES OF SKETCHES OF THE LIVES, TIMES AND WORKS OF THE OLD  
MASTERS OF ANATOMY AND SURGERY.

BY GEORGE JACKSON FISHER, M. D.

V. GABRIELLO FALLOPIO.

1523-1562.



FALLOPIUS was one of the distinguished trio which the world has selected to bear the preëminent title of "the great restorers of anatomy." Sketches of two have already been given in this series—Vesalius, of Brussels, and Eustachius, of Rome. Their researches were, however, so original and were crowned by so many actual discoveries, the systems of anatomy and physiology which they elaborated and left to posterity are such monuments of accuracy and scientific genius, as compared with the meagre, erroneous, and altogether sorry little epitomes of previous writers, that they would seem rather to deserve the title of founders than that of mere restorers. Anatomy had scarcely reached the dignity of a science before these

great men took their scalpels and quills in hand, as it certainly did through their united researches, discoveries, and literary contributions.

Gabriel Fallopius, who descended from a noble family, was born at Modena, in Italy, as is generally stated, about the year 1523. Historians are divided both as to the year of his birth and that of his death, and hence concerning his age. Camillus, Ghilinus, James Philip Tomasinus, and Nicolas Comneus Papadopoli, (*Hist. Gymnas. Patavin. Tom. II*, p. 315) declare that Fallopius was born in 1490, and died in 1563, in the seventy-third year of his age. Astruc inclines to this opinion, and remarks, "which opinion, not only the authority of the above authors, but likewise the various and numerous functions which he executed, seem to confirm; as also, his long travels over almost all Europe, and the office of professor in the University of Pisa, before he accepted the offer of the Senate of Venice, and settled at Padua; all which could scarce be executed in less than seventy-three years." On the other hand Thannus (*Hist. of his own times, Lib. 34.*) and Castellanus (*Lives of celebrated physicians*) affirm, that Fallopius ended a prosperous life prematurely, being born in 1523 and dying in 1562, at the age of thirty-nine.

Fallopius studied medicine at Ferrara under the famous masters, Antonio Musa Brassavola and John Baptist Montanus, as we learn from one of the works of our author (*De Morbo Gallico, Cap. 47*). He is said to have enjoyed a strong and vigorous constitution, and extraordinary mental ability, which received the highest culture in most departments of learning. He was an eminent practitioner of medicine as well as an untiring student. He was appointed professor of anatomy at Pisa, in the year 1548; and in the year 1551, at the instance of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosmo I, he received a professorship at Padua, as successor

of the renowned Vesalius. Here besides the chair of anatomy and surgery and of botany, he also held the office of superintendent of the new botanic garden in that city. Surely the title of professor in those days was no sinecure. He remained in Padua to the day of his death, which occurred on the ninth of October, 1562. Having enjoyed a brilliant career he was very properly succeeded by his favorite pupil Fabricius ab Aquapendente, who had been for some time previously his anatomical demonstrator. His collected works, as published in Venice, 1606, embrace twenty-four treatises distributed in three folio volumes, containing in all over 1500 pages. Only one of his works was published during his lifetime, viz., his *Observationes Anatomicæ*, Venice, 8vo, 1561, which is considered one of his most valuable, containing as it does most of his discoveries and his animadversions on the works of other anatomists and particularly his numerous corrections of the errors into which his distinguished predecessor, Vesalius, had fallen.

Willis, in his life of Harvey (London, 8vo, 1878, p. 101), says: "Fallopian shows himself at all times so adverse a critic of Vesalius, that he seems to have been animated by something like personal hostility toward him. Fallopian had for many years been engaged obscurely, but usefully, as prosector in the anatomical theatre of Padua, and probably looked to the professor's chair as his rightful inheritance when Vesalius was appointed over his head. More than this, Vesalius being engaged in seeing his great work through the press at Basle in 1541 and the early part of 1542, Fallopian appears to have acted as his substitute for a term; and as 'two stars keep not their orbit in one sphere,' smothered dislike broke out at length into the open enmity which is unhappily transmitted to us in the writings of Fallopian." The same spirit is said to have been shown toward his contemporaries generally.

He was the first anatomist who described the ethmoid and sphenoid bones, the muscles of the soft palate, and the villi and valvulæ conniventes of the small intestines. He also described the ear more minutely than had ever before been done. He discovered the little canal along which the facial nerve passes after leaving the auditory; it is still called the *aquæductus Fallopii*. He demonstrated the fact of the communication of the mastoid cells with the cavity of the tympanum; and also described the fenestræ rotunda and ovalis. In the treatment of diseases of the ear, he used an aural speculum, and employed sulphuric acid for the removal of polypi from the meatus. In some of his supposed discoveries he had been long anticipated; for example, the tubes which bear his name were known and accurately described by Herophilus over three hundred years before the Christian era, and also by Rufus of Ephesus, of whom Galen speaks as the best anatomist of the second century. Rufus refers to two varicose and tortuous vessels passing from the testes (as the ovaries were called) to the cavity of the uterus. Fallopius, however, gave a full account of their course, position, size and structure. He cut into them and found them hollow, gave them the name of *tubæ seminales*, and posterity attached his name to them, and in time came to a better comprehension of their true function. This is not the only instance in the history of anatomical discovery where the name of a person, not its discoverer, has been given to an organ. Allusion has been made to Fallopius as a botanist; a genus of plants, *Fallopia*, has been named in honor of him. He wrote on metals, baths, syphilis, and various subjects, as the following titles will show.

Before giving a list of the several editions of his works, I will mention the fact that some authorities maintain that all of his works, except his *Obs. Anatom.*, were published,

not from his manuscripts, but from the notes taken by the pupils who attended his prelections. In support of this, it is stated that the style of the several treatises differ essentially and to a degree that precludes the possibility of their having all been written by the same author. Fallopius read most if not all of his lectures, and it is probable that his manuscripts were used and more or less touched up by those who edited them after his death.

*Obs. anatom.* lib. v. Venetiis, 1561, 8°; Parisiis, 1562, 8°; Helmstadii, 1585, 1588, 8°. *Libelli duo, alter de Ulceribus, alter de Tumoribus*, etc. Venet., 1573, 4°; Erfurti, 1577, 4°. *De Thermalibus aquis*. lib. vii. *De metallis et fossilibus*. Venet., 1564, 4°; 1569, 4°. *De Morbo Gallico tractatus*. Venet., 1564, 4°; 1574, 8°. *De Simplicibus Medicamentis purgantibus*. Venet., 1666, 4°. *Opuscula varia*. Patavii, 1566. *Expositus in librum Galeni de ossibus*. Venet., 1570, 4°. *De Compositione Medicamentorum*. Venet., 1570, 4°. *De parte Medicinæ quæ Chirurgia nuncupatur, necnon in Librum Hippocrates de vulneribus capitis*, etc. Venet., 1571, 4°. *De humani corporis Anatome Compendium*. Venet., 1571, 8°; Patavii, 1585, 8°. *Lectiones de partibus similariibus corporis humani*. Noribergæ, 1575, fol. *Opera genuina omnia*. Venetiis, 1584, 1596, 1606, folio; Francofurti, 1600, folio, and supplement, 1606.