

ROBINSON'S LECTURES.

LECTURE II.

HISTORICAL VIEW OF ANCIENT THEORIES.

That divine philosopher, Plato, said, *light* was the shadow of the Deity, and *truth*, his soul. That the wise and good, as they approximated to the source of glory and intelligence were clothed and animated by that heavenly essence, which he poured out from the fountain of his eternal being! That into the cup *mized* for the formation of man he poured a portion of his own divinity; that this divine principle, rational and immortal, resides in the brain, the seat of sublimity and great conceptions; but another soul, which dwells in the breast, formed by the inferior deities, was mortal and destitute of reason; which contracts *evil, pain and sorrow*, and involves all the woes of man, *misery and death*, and the despair of *hades*! That the gods not being under the influence of this mortal inferior soul, do good to man without selfish or interested views; and man, as he aspires to the divine life, acts upon the same principle.

The admirable saying of Bias, one of the seven sages, was greatly esteemed by this philosopher, "*Omnia mea mecum porto*"—I carry with me all my possessions; being wholly occupied in promoting the public good, and laying up the treasures of the mind, of which neither fate, nor foes, nor death could rob him, he accounted every thing else as nothing.

Those who devote themselves to a new theory—who have to stand alone in defence of an unknown *truth*, and to combat alone the triumphant pride of an established science, would require a large portion of the self-denying spirit of the Grecian sage. And Dr. Thomson seems to have been admirably endowed with that supreme devotion to his object, which brings the martyr to the stake, and the patriot to pour out his blood on the field of battle. The loss of five thousand dollars,* to a poor man with a large family, imprisonment and chains, and the tribunal of death, are trials which might shake the fortitude of the firmest nerve. I cannot help uniting in his own sentiment, that Providence must have presided over his labors, with an especial care for the good of society, or he never would have brought them to such a triumphant conclusion.

In order to unfold and display the system of Dr. Thomson more thoroughly, I will take a review of those theories which have obtained in the world, and triumphed in the schools, until they met the fate of all terrestrial things.

For the origin of medical science, we are indebted to Egypt, that profound and universal school of the ancient world. Their medical knowledge was famous in the days of Moses, and her physicians celebrated in his history. The ailments and ablutions recorded

in her books, so congenial to the health of an Eastern clime, enforced on the observance of Israel, have been ascribed to his knowledge, of the Egyptian science of medicine, by those who have denied to him the high prerogative of having acted under the inspiration of the Almighty.

The invention of medicine is generally ascribed to TOTH, TAAUTUS, or the first HERMES. He was regent or king of Egypt, of the second dynasty of MANETHO, and the tutor of Queen ISIS. JULIUS AFRICANUS and SINCLELLS make him the same as SYDIC, brother to the CABERRI. He published six books on physic; the first treated of anatomy. The name of ESCULAPIUS or ASCLEPEUS was given him, on account of his great skill in healing diseases, as the terms import, being a compound of two Greek words, *astlen* and *epos*—Merciful healer! and this name he richly merited, according to all the history of these times. He taught the healing art to Queen ISIS; who, herself, was the inventor of several medicines, and is therefore called by the Egyptians the Goddess of Health. She taught medicine to her son ORUS or APOLLO, and communicated her knowledge in the writings of the CABERRI.

The distribution of medicine into distinct departments, gave rise to a vast number of physicians in Egypt, and would have been a source of great improvement in the science, had it not been for the restrictive laws of that ancient kingdom. Every physician confined himself to the cure of *one* disease only. One had the *eyes*, another the *teeth*, the *head*, the *belly*, the *lungs*, the *veins*, the *viscera*, *surgery*, *anatomy*, *embalming*. Such undivided attention to one object only, was defeated in all its beneficial results, by confining the physicians to fixed rules and recipes, set down in their sacred registers, collected from experiments and observations. So long as the physician practised according to those rules, he was safe, let the effect of his medicine on the patient be what it would; but the moment he dared to depart, and follow his own judgment, it was at the hazard of his life; which he most assuredly lost, if the patient died.

Physicians had a provision made them by law, which required them to practice in the army, and on strangers travelling in the country, without fee or reward. Their medicines were very simple prescriptions, prepared from herbs; and were generally evacuations, which they effected by injections, potions, emetics, fasting, and the waters of the Nile. These they repeated every day, or every third day, as the case might be, until the patient was relieved.

The physicians, in addition to their science, joined the study of *astronomy, magic*, and *ritual mysteries*; believing that the influence of a god, a star or planet, or infernal demon, gave powerful influence and efficacy to their

prescription their patient operations cures found. But a chemical philosopher table remedies not only caged to you elixir, then the Greeks

Their Ki for the pur of physic. curious observations proceeds d finger of t Egyptians; dipped that to sprinkle 2. That a dred years ments, that old, weigh by the ratio fifty; when tion till one died for wa

CHIRON.—to Greece, and son of Argonautic learned genius, music, Esc astronomy. the instruct and all the tion. His pictures, a scribed by all we have He was sh and prayed god heard the heaven tion Sagitt

ESCLAP ron, was th flourishd fancy he w sally, and w by a dog. time miss them on th possessed a herd brought when a bo sage Chir largely pro that of his his own di who were Troy. He the unhappy

* Total loss about \$300,000.—S. THOMSON.