

These were the pampered minions of fortune. As in our own time, I fear there were some who received less than nothing for their reward. The state physicians were paid a yearly sum, provided out of the taxes.

Hippocrates, even in his own time styled "The Great," an epithet which has not been begrudged him in succeeding ages, was born in the island of Cos in the first year of the eightieth Olympiad (about 460 B.C.), thirty years before the Peloponnesian war. He was of an Asklepiad family, being according to the story the eighteenth in the direct male line from Asklepios; on his mother's side, the nineteenth from Hercules. He, therefore, would early be instructed in all the traditionary lore of this celebrated race, and would be initiated into the mystic rites pursued at the famous temple in his birthplace. He is said to have studied medicine under his father and the gymnasiarch Herodicus. In philosophy, he was an adherent of Heraclitus, one of the most illustrious of the followers of Pythagoras. He travelled widely in foreign countries, notably Egypt and Asia Minor and thus, no doubt, became conversant with whatever there was of medical teaching and practice in his day.

That we may adjust our mental perspective, let us glance for a moment at the time in which he lived. It was the "Golden Age" of Pericles, the most enlightened and greatest ruler Athens ever possessed. It has been said that while "other ages have had their bright particular stars, the age of Pericles is the Milky Way of great men." Truly, they were giants in those days. Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were producing their immortal dramas. Anaxagoras, Zeno, Socrates, and Plato were creating the new study of philosophy, destined to revolutionize the human mind; Democritus and Leucippus had invented the atomic theory; Myron and Phidias were carving out of marble their incomparable masterpieces; Herodotus was recording his travels in the great work which earned for him the appellation of "The Father of History;" Hippocrates was still a young man when other lights appeared, the historians Thucydides and Xenophon, the orators Lysias and Isocrates; the scoffer Aristophanes. As a man of position and education, Hippocrates must have been thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the age in which he lived and, no doubt, represented in himself the highest literary and scientific culture.

We are enabled to form a very accurate opinion of Hippocrates' character and attainments from his voluminous writings, which fortunately have descended to us in a tolerable state of preservation. Without entering into the vexed question of the genuineness or otherwise of some of these, for it is certain that not a few are the production of his descendants or disciples, or of unscrupulous individuals who desired to add the weight of his name and authority to their own less worthy productions,