

largely remain a matter for conjecture and inference. In the Homeric poems we find that Medicine had already something of an organization. There was a recognized medical profession; there was a definite medical practice, more especially in connection with wounds and other injuries; there was a nomenclature of disease and the parts of the body very similar to that employed by Hippocrates centuries later, all going to prove that even at this early date Medicine had a history and tradition and, in fact, was far from being in its infancy.

We have seen that among all primitive peoples certain rude ideas in regard to the treatment of disease would arise at the demand of circumstances, which would afford a starting point for a system of medical practice. The Greeks were an offshoot of the great Aryan or Indo-Germanic stock and would bring with them, no doubt, in the course of their westward march, their heritage of medical lore. How much they were indebted to the civilizations of Mesopotamia, India, Phœnicia, and Egypt, it is now impossible to say. The inclusion in the Greek pharmacopœia of remedies such as sesame, cadamom, cinnamon, and valerian, has been interpreted by some as indicating the influence of India, while the Egyptian oak and acacia, cumin, animal derivatives, and certain mineral substances, such as alum, salt, and antimony, were possibly introduced from Egypt. Tradition has it that the rudiments of the arts and sciences were brought to Greece from Egypt by Cadmus, together with the alphabet, and it is a fact that the first medical schools were established at Rhodes, Cos, Knidos, and Myrene, places where in the course of the operations of trade and commerce the civilization of Greece would come in contact with that of Egypt and the Orient. Naturally the centres of traffic would be also the centres of wealth and intellectual life, and the places where physicians would be most apt to congregate. Nevertheless, there is no reason for supposing that the influence of outside races upon Greek medical thought was more than superficial. In fact, the well-known contempt of the Greek for the Barbarian, whose customs he despised and whose language he disdained, would militate against any close intellectual interchange. When the Greek did emerge from his aloofness to establish colonies in Asia Minor, Arabia, Egypt, and the East, it was to plant a civilization far superior to that which he found. Therefore, there is no sufficient reason for concluding that the Greeks, a race so remarkably gifted intellectually, who in the domains of art, music, poetry, philosophy, and science, have left an indelible impress on the page of human history, an influence potent for good even to-day, ever borrowed much from outside nations. They were, rather, creators, true poets and ideasmith. As they could create in one department of mental activity, they could create in another.