

of the great Grecian poet, Homer. Hippocrates, then styled by most writers the "*Father of Medicine*," was born at Cos 450 (some say 460) years before the birth of Christ, and was a member of a family which had produced some eminent physicians before him, besides, by his mother's side, having descended from Hercules. Born with these advantages, and stimulated by the fame of his ancestors, he devoted himself early and zealously to the cultivation of the healing art. Ill-content with the empirical practices characteristic of his progenitors, he placed himself under the instruction of Herodicus, the founder of Gymnastic Medicine,* as well as other eminent philosophers. Unwilling to accept as *truth* every theory advanced and espoused by his instructors, he judged for himself, and adopted only those principles, which to him, appeared founded in sound reason; and, in his researches into the science, he ever sought the true path of observation. Thus was he enabled to better elucidate the deductions of experience, and to sweep away the false theories with which Medicine had been so darkly clouded by those possessed of no practical knowledge of disease; and the rational or dogmatic sect of physicians have always acknowledged Hippocrates as their leader. Galen declares that his writings should be revered as the voice of the Deity. Most of the numerous treatises—some seventy-two in number—attributed to him appear to have been the accumulated knowledge of his immediate ancestors, which he simply collected and compiled. For the accuracy and fidelity with which he describes the phenomena and progress of disease, he has scarcely been surpassed. Although many of his doctrines are erroneous, they have, at least, the merit of being in advance of those of his predecessors. Of all his writings, his "*Aphorisms*" are the most important, comprising a collection of all the conclusions to which his researches had conducted him, with a general review of all that was known of Medicine and Philosophy in his day. They were

* *Gymnastica*, from "*Gymnos*," naked. *Gymnastic Medicine* relates to the cure of disease by exercise, or the rules to be observed in the different varieties of exercises concerned in the preservation of health. As master of an academy where warlike and manly exercises were taught, Herodicus, of Salymbra, in Thrace, observed his pupils to be very healthful, and adopted exercise both as a preventive and curative measure in his practice of physic. Hippocrates censures him for having carried his views to excess, and Plato warmly condemns his practice of enjoining his patients to walk from Athens to Megara, a distance of over twenty miles, and to return home on foot as soon as they had touched the city walls.