

her suitors to kill her son, became speechless. The condition was an emotional one and temporary—Penelope's eyes filled with tears and her heart and knees trembled. There is no mention of any abiding aphasia.

Of medicines we hear but little. Nestor in his youth killed Moullos, who had to wife the eldest daughter of Augeias, the fair-haired Agamede, "who knew all the drugs the broad earth bears." This, taken in association with the above-mentioned treatment of wounds, suggests that there was already some knowledge of simples. This knowledge was sometimes turned to baser uses. In the *Odyssey* we read that the suitors feared that Telemachos might be intending to bring poisonous drugs from Ephyra, which he would put into the wine and destroy them. It will be remembered that it was from Ephyra that Odysseus obtained his arrow poison.

In a most famous passage of the *Odyssey* the use by Helen of a narcotic drug of Egyptian origin is described. The narrative tells how Telemachos visited Sparta in search of news of his father, and was told by Menelaos of the sad fate of many of the chieftains on their return from Troy, and, it continues, on hearing this they wept together in common sorrow. Whereupon Helen threw in to their wine "a drug which had the power to remove grief and anger, and to cause oblivion of all ills, and whoever mixes it in his cup and drinks would not shed a tear during the whole day, not even if his father and mother should die, nor though one should slay his brother or dear son with the sword, and he should behold it with his eyes. Helen, the daughter of Zeus, possessed such helpful, noble drugs, given to her by Polydamna, the wife of Thon, in the land of Egypt, where the fruitful earth bears drugs, many noble, many baleful, and whose doctors are more intelligent than other men, for they are of the race of Paion."

Many suggestions have been made as to the nature of this *nepeuthes pharmakon*—grief-allaying drug. Some have supposed it was *cannabis indica*, which is known to have been used in Egypt in the sixteenth century A.D. This narcotic seems to have been cultivated first on the slopes of the Himalayas, and thence to have spread east and west, but no traces of its hempen fibres have been found in the mummy cases of Egyptian tombs, and in the time of Herodotus it had only penetrated as far as Scythia. A more plausible suggestion is that the drug was opium, for the poppy had been grown in Egypt from very early times, and Diodorus says that the secret of its qualities and preparation was preserved by the women of Thebes.

But there is no reference to opium in the genuine writings of Hippocrates, and its use and value were unknown to the early Greeks. The