

THE ANCESTRY OF OUR PROFESSION.

The domain of science and literature has been aptly likened to a republic, wherein all its votaries are regarded as being upon an equality. It makes its own laws, each member having an equal right with his fellow. Truly, there is no royal road to learning. All must keep the same weary vigils, and pass through the same exacting ordeals. As scientists, we owe no allegiance to any nationality, kindred, race or tongue. We all tread the same broad platform, each contributing his quota to the general fund of knowledge. Each generation has handed down its experience which has been verified and perfected by following generations. Thus the general fund of knowledge has grown, gradually becoming more and more defined, facts being weighed, and great truths established.

Let us look for a moment at the origin or early history of our own beloved profession, in other words, "our ancestry." Melchisedek, king of Salem, whose name signifies "King of Righteousness," who brought forth bread and wine and blessed Abraham, was both king, priest, and physician. He is regarded as the great prototype of Christ the God-man, who went about preaching, healing the sick, and raising the dead. In Melchisedek, as was usual in Egypt and India, we find a combination of the priesthood and physician. Melchisedek, being both king, prophet, priest and physician—a noble ancestry!—our profession has, as we have seen, both a royal and priestly origin.

In Hellenic history, the first allusion to medicine of an authentic character, is found in the Homeric poems, which were written sometime about 1050 B.C. In allusions there made, it is clear that medicine had already a history. We find a distinct and organized profession, with rules and regulations as to the treatment of injuries, which must have taken many ages to formulate, also we meet with terms in nomenclature which long after were used by Hippocrates. The Homeric heroes themselves are represented as having considerable skill in surgery, and able to attend to ordinary wounds and injuries. But there appears to have been a professional class represented by Machaon and Podalirius, the two sons of Asclepius, who are treated with great respect. It would appear, too, from the *Æthiopis* of Archinus that the duties of these two were not precisely the same. Machaon's task was more especially to heal injuries, while Podalirius had received from his father the gift "of recognizing what was not visible to the eye, and tending what could