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THE ANCIENT GREEK SCHOOLS OF MEDICINE.

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When I undertook to compose the paper which I have the honour of presenting for your consideration to-night, I found myself at once confronted with not inconsiderable difficulties. Where was I to begin, and where to end? The matter-of-fact person, if in captious mood, would perhaps reply, "Why not begin at the beginning?" A very brief consideration convinced me that this was as sensible a way as any other. Of all the civilizations of antiquity we know most about that of the Greeks. Their story can be traced beyond the confines of history. Their literature is venerable with age. The origin of so primitive an art as medicine may well be studied, therefore, in the record of such a people. But where to end was more difficult to decide. Before it could be settled, as a matter of fact, it was necessary to determine how I was going to deal with the task.

We might, conceivably, approach the discussion of the subject of medicine in ancient Greek times from several different directions. We might, for example, occupy ourselves with a consideration of the origin and development of medical practice. We might study the medical profession as a social force, in other words, in its relationship to the general body politic. Or, again, we might investigate the relationship of medicine to the other natural sciences. Lastly, we might take up the question of the evolution of medical knowledge. None of these aspects of the subject would be unimproving or devoid of interest, nor, in fact, is it possible to give a connected account of medicine from any one point of view without trenching considerably upon the others. But I feel, personally, that it will be at once more illuminating and more stimulating if we, in the main, confine ourselves to tracing the origin and development of medical science, that is to say, of the principles which have governed and should govern the rational application of therapeutic measures. And this, for reasons that I shall at once proceed to elucidate.

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