

Greeks had two physicians, Machaon and Podalirius, who were called the sons of Asclepius. After this his descendants were the recognized physicians, and their secrets and experiences were passed on from father to son. In this we have the crude origin of clinical medicine. A grateful people erected temples in honor of their benefactors, and to these, as the residing places of the sons of Asclepius, sick people flocked in large numbers. Soon, however—as the oath of Hippocrates shows—evils arose. First, in the abuse of this knowledge; and secondly, in the rise of mysticism and superstition. The result was the degradation of the high ideal of the sons of Asclepius into a mercenary craft.

But from the well-known shrine on the Island of Cos, and from the house of the Asclepiadæ, a reformer, Hippocrates, arose, who enabled the profession to regain its high position. He founded a school and bound his disciples by the celebrated oath of Hippocrates, a part of which reads as follows: "He (the pupil) will reverence his teacher as a father and his descendants as brethren; that he will use his art for the benefit of his patients and never to their injury or death, even if requested by them; that he will be chaste and never divulge any of his professional secrets." Hippocrates devoted himself to collecting and organizing all the medical information possible, and is credited with being the author of seventy volumes. Thus was a sure foundation secured for medical science. From this there resulted accurate observation of diseases and minute descriptions of all their symptoms. Many interesting examples of this are found in the writings of Hippocrates, making him a model of accurate observation for all time.

The practice of medicine as founded by Hippocrates is intensely interesting, but we have room only for a mere outline of his theories. Health and disease were governed in two ways, by external and internal causes. External causes included the influence of season, climate, water and exercise. Special emphasis was laid on exercise, so much so that it was incorporated in the curriculum of every school and academy. The internal causes were the influence of the food and the condition of the constituents of the body. This brings us to the physiology of Hippocrates, which was necessarily very crude and undeveloped. The body was supposed to be composed of the four elements—earth, air, fire and water. Various combinations of these produced the four humours—blood, phlegm, black and yellow bile—and in these lay the principal seat of disease. The chief treatment was through external causes, and internal medicines were quite secondary. This shews that, with all their imperfections, they were firmly convinced that they must work with nature.

The principal lesson to be learned from his practice of medicine is the close relationship between the different branches of the science, a thorough knowledge of the one depending on a thorough knowledge of the other. Hippocrates' ideas of physiology were crude, chiefly because he had little or no knowledge of anatomy. We learn from many sources that dissection was not allowed by the Greeks, as they regarded it as a profanation of the human body. Consequently physicians had few opportunities to study the anatomy of the body, and even the slight knowledge they had is surprising, when we consider that this was over 2,200 years ago.

This is a brief sketch of the work of a great but modest man, whose favorite expression was: "Life is short but art is long." He died about 357 B.C., and so great was the esteem in which he was held by the Greeks that for over 600 years his tomb was preserved and plainly to be seen.

After his death several schools arose. Plato speaks of two of these, those who practiced by charms and incantations and those who were guided by rational observations and remedies. These were split up into many smaller divisions, and true progress was much retarded by profitless controversy. Soon after this Alexandria became the great centre of advanced medical science. Here the first skeleton was articulated, and about 330 B.C. the first human body was dissected by Eristratus, the result of which was a much more accurate knowledge of the constitution of the body.

It was not till medicine was firmly established by Hippocrates that it attracted much attention beyond the Asclepiadæ, and then physicians became divided into two main classes. The first class was the public or civic physicians, while the others travelled around from place to place. The former became quite important, received high salaries, and had fashionable booths in the wealthy parts of the city.

At Rome medical men were held in small esteem till the days of the empire, when the profession was given a standing and court physicians, etc., appointed. It was here that the profession began to divide into separate branches, physicians for internal troubles, surgeons, oculists, dentists, aurists, and lastly lady medics, so that Queen's did not have the first lady medical college.

Such is a brief outline of some points connected with the origin of a science, the noblest to which any student may apply himself; a science which demands of its devotees a life of self-sacrifice, for, as Plato says, it seeks not its own interest, but the interest of that to which as an art it belongs. Its progress has been great, but even now we are only beginning to understand the truth of the old saying, *Vita brevis, ars longa*.