

elements of older medical practice, as well as of the merely speculative philosophy of "Empedocles and others," and makes it a true observational science. This was a considerable advance, no doubt, in the way of clearing the field for real progress, and it is the great merit of Hippocrates that he succeeded in reducing this observational science to a system and furnishing it with those laws and general conceptions which a system requires. Starting from this principle that dieting was the chief business of the medical art, he was led not only to study the value and action of food in the treatment of the sick, but also the stages of progress in disease, in order to discover at what periods either food or medicine could be most safely given and with the best effect. He thus reached the therapeutic principle that it is necessary not only to know the right kind of diet and medicine in disease, but also the right moment for intervening with them. In this way Hippocrates, studying the condition of his patient closely, gave a great development to medicine. He discovered the critical days in diseases, particularly in fevers, the characteristic progress of which, with all their remissions and exacerbations, he describes with great minuteness. His clinical observations are almost modern in their fullness and accuracy. Philosophically viewed, the progress which Hippocrates thus achieved in medical science was to bring disease clearly under the conception of law and to exhibit it as interference with *φύσις* or nature, that power in the universe which moulds and tends to maintain all things in health and harmony, and which therefore naturally resists disease. Hence his early recognition of the principle of the healing power of nature, *vis medicatrix naturæ*. Nature, he said, is the physician of diseases. The human physician's business was mainly, in his view, to wait on nature and assist it in its efforts to throw off disease. It was a scientific conception of the subject which at once raised it above all the superstitious fancies of the age regarding the demoniacal character of disease, the use of charms and the like. Hippocrates is as solidly naturalistic in his views and treatment of disease as a physician of to-day.

A striking characteristic of Hippocrates, and perhaps of the best Asclepiad schools generally, was the power of general-