

There have been gods and goddesses of disease and of medicine from very ancient days. Back in the far-away times of the first Chaldean Empire, some five thousand years ago, there was a Fever-God, a Plague-God and even a Headache God; and to overcome their evil influences the intervention and good offices were required of el-Merodach the son of Ea, "by whose spells the sick are restored," and of the Goddess Gula, the Queen of Physicians, "whose wisdom alleviates the ills of humanity."

Similar gods with similar attributes may be traced down through the various empires and dynasties, Babylonian Theban, Assyrian, Median, Phoenician and Egyptian, until under the Ptolemies the Hellenic Gods were identified with the Egyptian, after Alexander the Great of Macedon bridged the gulf dividing Occident and Orient. And then we have Apollo, who was, amongst other attributes, God of Medicine under his name of Paeon; and the original "paeans of rejoicing" were hymns loudly chanted by the Delphian virgins after Apollo had been sufficiently propitiated to overcome the pestilence. Apollo being possibly too busy about other matters, Aesculapius, his son, is the God of Medicine most usually recognized; and then, in the Homeric days, we first hear of a Goddess of Health, Hygeia, daughter of Aesculapius, and so grand-daughter of Apollo;—Hygeia, the most delightful and pleasing personality of all those that have come down to us from the ancient mythologies. The conjunction of the Goddess of Health with, and descent from, the Gods of Medicine is not without its element of flattery to the medical profession. It is at her shrine that I propose to pay tribute this evening.

A writer on hygiene has divided the history of sanitation into four epochs or eras:

- The Hebraic epoch, or era of Domestic Sanitation;
- The Roman epoch, or era of Municipal Sanitation;
- The Gothic epoch, or era of National Sanitation; and
- The epoch or era of International Sanitation.

This is in some ways a convenient division, and I shall make use of it to a certain extent this evening.

THE HEBRAIC EPOCH OR ERA OF DOMESTIC SANITATION.

With regard to this epoch, I shall not detain you by going over the familiar ground of the wonderful set of hygienic rules and regulations known as the Levitical Law, or the Laws of Moses. They were most perfectly adapted to the conditions of life of those to whom they were given, and many of them are good for all times and for all environments.