

the rich man his sheep, pig or goat. Where the ceremonial purification took place is uncertain. Over the entrance to the temple was inscribed "Only pure souls may enter here." When night comes the sick man brings his bedclothing into the abaton and reposes on his pallet, putting some small gift on the altar. The Nakoroi come around to light the sacred lamps, and the priest then enters and recites the evening prayers to the god, entreating divine help and divine enlightenment for all the sick assembled there. He then collects the gifts upon the altar and departs. Later the Nakoroi enter and put out the lights, enjoin silence and command every one to fall asleep and to hope for guiding visions from the god. According to inscriptions the god frequently appeared in person or in visions, speaking to patients concerning their ailments. These visitations may have been merely hallucinations, or some priest in the dim light may have acted the part of Aesculapius. Whether the patient was put under the influence of some drug provocative of dreams, or whether by some acoustic trick the priests caused the sick to hear spoken words which they attributed to the deity, it is difficult to say.

The valley of the Heiron was the habitat of a large yellow serpent, perfectly harmless and susceptible of domestication. It has been seen during the past century. A number of these dwelt in the sanctuary, perhaps in the vaults of the tholos. The sick were delighted and encouraged when any of these creatures approached them and were in the habit of feeding them with cakes. The serpents seem to have been trained to lick with their forked tongue any ailing part. The dog was also trained to lick any injured or painful part of the body.

In the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, the blind *Plutus* enters the abaton of the *Asclepion* at Athens in order to be cured. *Aesculapius* and his daughters, *Iaso* and *Panaceaia*, appear in person; they whistle to the sacred serpents, which at once approach, lick the blind eyes and vision is restored.

On the walls of the eastern abaton were fixed two large stone tablets, bearing the title "Cures by *Apollo* and *Aesculapius*." Most of the fragments of these tablets have been re-