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PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS

CHAPTER I.

INTERESTING DATA IN THE HISTORY OF TUBERCULOSIS.

In this chapter it is not intended to give a complete history of pulmonary tuberculosis,—a disease known to the medical writers of all ages,—but only to put in relief some of the interesting data in connection with the various views that have been expressed on the contagious nature of this disease and the methods of treatment instituted.

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, who lived from 460 to 377 B. C., gave us the first ideas in regard to judicious exercise and the rest cure when he told us (vol. VII, ¶ 49) to have the patient walk if he feels benefited thereby; if not, to rest as much as possible. The hereditary tendency he mentions in his aphorisms (sect. IV, 8). He also believed in the curability of the disease,¹ but we see nowhere any mention of its contagious nature.

Isocrates, who lived about the fifth century before Christ, and who shortly preceded or was a contemporary of Hippocrates, taught that consumption was contagious, but he apparently had few disciples.²

Areteus,³ supposed to have lived about the year 250 B. C., has

¹ Οἷος ἢ ἐξ ἀρχῆς θεραπευθῇ ἰσχύς γίverαι ("if the patient [consumptive] is treated from the beginning, he will get well"), Hippocrates, vol. VII, p. 77. From Littré's French translation.

² Francis Adam's translation of Hippocrates; quoted from Lawrence F. Flick's "The Contagiousness of Phthisis," Philadelphia, 1888.

³ Areteus, chap. III. "De morborum diuturnorum et acutorum causis, signis et curatione."