

We are not told how the root acted, but Paion, the physician to the gods, put similar pain-allaying drugs on the wound of Ares, and it is stated that they acted like a sap which curdles milk. Perhaps, then, the powdered root was astringent.

The treatment of wounds in those ancient times would thus appear to have been very simple. The first "field-dressing," if we may so call it, was anything available, for instance a sling, which would stop the bleeding. Subsequently the arrow was pulled or cut out, the wound either sucked on the field of battle, or washed with warm water at the "base," and some astringent powdered root dusted on it, which allayed the pain and stayed the bleeding.

The Machaon mentioned above and his brother Podaleirios were, according to Homer, the sons of Asklepios, "the noble physician," who lived at Trikke, in Southern Thessaly, and had learnt his art from Cheiron, the "most just" of the Centaurs, a savage tribe living in the hills near Mount Peleion. The Centaurs were probably one of the autochthonous races of the Greek Peninsula, which persisted after the invasion of the Achaians from the north. Cheiron imparted his knowledge of simples to others besides Asklepios, for instance to Achilles, who in his turn taught Patroclus.

Asklepios was an old man at the time of the Trojan War, and not able to fight himself, but his two sons Machaon and Podaleirios set sail with thirty ships to the siege of Troy. They served both as chieftains and as army doctors. They fought in the front ranks as . . . . ., and treated wounds. We do not hear that any other doctors accompanied the Greek army, though there were probably some. Thus Agamemnon, speaking in general terms, said that "a doctor is a man worth many others, both to cut out arrows and to lay on them soothing drugs." And in the *Odyssey* a doctor is classed with seers, hewers of ships' timbers, and inspired bards as being "the bidden guests of mortals throughout the illimitable earth." We are told very little of the exploits of the brothers, but finally Machaon was wounded, struck in the right shoulder by an arrow from the bow of Alexander. Whereupon Machaon mounted the chariot of Nestor, who "wipped up his horses, and they willingly flew back to the hollow ships." On arriving at Nestor's hut, Hekamede, a handmaiden captured by Achilles at Tenedos, made for them a curious drink of yellow honey, barley meal, and Pramnian wine. The garrulous Nestor, after relating one of his long stories, departed to an observation post, bidding Machaon stay on and drink his wine until such time as the fair-haired Hekamede should heat some water to wash away the blood.

He was left in good hands, for we are told that his nurse "exceeded in counsel" all those taken captive at Tenedos; we may perhaps hope