

before Christ, was satirising the vices of the world he knew so well, was more fertile than Ennius in noting maladies and their symptoms, such as pneumonia, pleurisy, and a strange complaint called *querquera* fever, together with other ills that flesh was heir to then as now.

The duties of a doctor were much more varied than they are to-day, for not only was he consulted to cure diseases, but he was also entrusted with the task of poisoning inconvenient people and torturing slaves. One of these latter gives us, in a passage in Plautus, a grim list of terrors in store for offenders of his class, such as switches, rods, hot knives, the pillory, the rack, and last but not least, "the cunning doctor so skilful in furrowing our shoulders with scars." Pity was not a favourite virtue among the Romans, and evidence of their barbarity is to be met with in every page of Plautus. Gluttonous slaves were branded on the stomach, thieves on the hand, liars on the tongue, fugitives on the feet; and one may safely take it that thumbs uplifted were more often displayed than thumbs turned down when the conquered gladiator appealed for mercy to the throng of bloodthirsty spectators in the amphitheatre. What we now call "white slavery" was rife among the Romans, whilst infanticide, as to which Terence throws a curious sidelight, prevailed to a frightful extent. The father had always the right to accept or decline the charge of a new-born child, which was laid on the ground for his decision. If he was favourably disposed the babe was taken up and tenderly cared for, but if the reverse the poor little mite was either exposed or else dropped into the *barathrum* (a deep pit) and the matter was ended.

Lucretius, in *De Rerum Natura*, gives us many of the medical ideas so familiar to him. Efficient blood-letting is described in one place, or the constituent parts of the eye in another. It is thus that he pictures death from the plague which ravaged Rome in his day. "Then, at the very last moment, on the eighth or ninth day, the nostrils became pinched, the eyes deep sunk, the temples hollow, and the skin cold." The progress of life through youth, and the gradual advance of decay and death, is also admirably painted by the poet, who committed suicide to avoid the anguish of the ills he had so vividly portrayed.

Virgil, too, who studied philosophy at Athens and physics at Naples, has many medical ideas to give us, not only on human diseases and their treatment, but also on veterinary matters. Horace also, who was content with little beyond private life, confidential intercourse, and a little good wine of Campania, is charmingly precise on medical matters, especially when they concern himself. In his account, which he and his friends made from Rome to Brundisium (Brindisi), he relates how, when they reached Capua, he and Virgil went to sleep whilst Mæcenas betook himself to tennis—which is "a bad thing for bleary-eyed and dyspeptic persons," a remark giving us some idea of the health of the two poets.

The importance of swimming, the value of sulphur baths, the benefit resulting (as in the curing of Augustus by his physician Musa) from hydrotherapy, all these things and many more are touched on by Horace, whose feeble health made him sympathise with the ills of others. He enjoyed life, however, with his many friends and his choice Falernian

until the summons came, when he met death smiling and wearing a crown of roses.

But the race of Latin poets had not died, for others succeeded him: Catullus, who denounces the evils of consanguineous marriages; Tibullus, who makes merry over the fashionable use of walnut juice as a cosmetic; and Publus Syrus, who sarcastically observes that "the public health is not a good thing for doctors." Then, too, we have Lucian discoursing about snake-bites, Ovid discussing the Cæsarian operation, Martial and Juvenal dwelling on the secret poisoning (especially with aconite) then so prevalent, or satirising the awful vices so rampant in high circles.

Truly we should feel grateful to all these old poets, not simply for the literary beauty of their works, but also for the vivid idea they give us of life in Ancient Rome, where the doctor played such an important part.

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Model Medical Institutions.

A German physician, Dr. Schaper, who has recently returned from a trip through Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, is enthusiastic over the model medical institutions he found there. He says that "Every one of the larger hospitals in Norway and Sweden has one pavilion devoted to all kinds of baths in addition to the ordinary bathing facilities in each ward. Male nurses are very rare. The nurses, after twenty-five years of service, are entitled to a small pension. In case of an infectious disease an ambulance is despatched on receipt of the telephone message, and the hospital and ward are notified by telephone that the patient is coming, by which means contact with the infected subject can be avoided. He adds that the lack of these precautions was grievously felt in the recent plague case in Berlin. The hospital facilities at Stockholm are so ample that there are eight beds for each 1,000 inhabitants. The medical course in Sweden requires twenty semesters, and in Norway fourteen, but the first two years are devoted more to the accessory sciences. Owing to the ample material, during the last six semesters the students are given special patients in the hospitals to treat, and are compelled to write out in detail the reports, which are then gone over by the professor in the class and criticised. The great Sabbatsberg Hospital at Stockholm has a detached tuberculosis annex and also a most attractive convalescent home. Still another annex is for delirious and noisy patients. Stockholm also has two shelters with twelve beds in each, for persons who become helpless in the street, with separate rooms for delirious subjects. Christiania has a model centralised arrangement for the reception of the sick. The physician in charge resides, with his family, in a centrally located building, formerly a hospital. Every morning the different hospitals telephone to him what empty beds are at their disposal in the different wards. He is notified by telephone when a sick person is coming. He can thus distribute to the best advantage the sick as they arrive. He keeps a detailed register of each person, noting where he comes from and other minor details. The city has only 250,000 inhabitants, and this plan was opposed at first by some of the professors, but as time has shown its advantages, all are now enthusiastic over it. In Sweden and Denmark anti-diphtheria serum is given free for prophylactic injections, and the dose of 4,000 units costs only about six cents.

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