

brother physicians, to whom her sex was not yet known.

Her inroads upon their financial rewards were keenly felt. Then the Athenian physicians suddenly evinced the customary professional amiability and good will, and a violent devotion to ethical standards, by vehemently denouncing Agnodice, "*As one that does corrupt men's wives.*"

To controvert this far from complimentary accusation by her loving medical brethren, Agnodice revealed her sex to her tormentors. The Medical Faculty of Athens indulged in protests in highly flavoured Greek, when this heinous crime became known. They persecuted the girl to the limit of human tolerance. They appealed to the law courts, for the law regulating the "practice of midwifery" had been violated.

Agnodice fell into the clutches of the law. Her ruin was imminent. Doubtless she already felt in anticipation its penalties, when, to the chagrin of the "most learned and reverend doctors," the matrons of Athens waited upon the courts "en masse," fearlessly telling the jurists that "*they were not husbands but enemies, who were going to condemn the person to whom they owed their lives.*" These veiled Athenian women as they stood before the lawyers were in reality pleading for their own lives, when demanding clemency for their learned sister. But their veils, as *Euripides* proves, were not so heavy as to hide their beauty. "Seeing my brother through my thinnest of veils."

In this instance, it must have vastly enhanced female beauty. The Athenian lawyers, whose profession has never been proof against the charms of a pretty woman, repealed the law debarring women from practicing midwifery, and were chivalrous enough to rule that "three of the sex should practice this art in Athens."

I believe this to be the first time history mentions a female following any branch of medical practice.

It is evident that there was a united body of medical men at Athens at that period, who were pioneers in organized opposition to illegal practices. There were no doubt exams. and statutes governing the practice of medicine, where "fools asked questions, for wise men to answer," as Francis Bacon has wisely said.

The Greeks and Romans alike believed that if a painless delivery took place, it was a positive sign as to the virtue of the woman, and a special dispensation of the gods. Then it was quite the thing for the woman, when

confinement was at hand, to be in the vicinity of a palm tree or hold in her hand palm branches, which eased her pain, so it was thought.

When the child was born, common reason prevailed. No sooner had the infant made his entrance into "this vale of tears" than they washed it in water.

But those of Lacedaemon, as Plutarch tells us in his life of Lycurgus, used not water but wine when the newly born saw light, "in order to estimate the temper and complexion of the bodies of the newly born." If these Spartans had the idea that the child might be feeble or "have convulsions, or faint upon being bathed," this was usually most unfortunate for the child; while those of vigorous and powerful constitution would "gain firmness and possess a temper like unto steel so hard would it be to overcome them."

Next came the division of the navel. This operation was called *δμφαλογηματα*, whence arose the saying "*Thy navel is not cut.*" The full import of this speech is not at first apparent, but this much: "*You are an infant scarce separate from one's mother,*" and later, in bluff King Hal's time, "*Thou art yet tied to thy mother's apron strings, thou varlet.*"

But just how this cord was severed, whether torn or cut by a sharp instrument, is yet open to argument. At all events it was done by the nurse, as the records show. After this operation, the child was wrapped by the nurse in "swaddling bands," lest its lower extremities, not being able to hold its weight, might become crooked.

The Spartans, however, used no such aid, but were of such experience that they brought up their young without such coddling and had straight strong children. The course followed by the Spartans Plutarch gives us fully in his life of Lycurgus as follows:

"Their management of children differed likewise from all the rest of the Grecians, in several ways, for they used them to any sort of meat, and sometimes to bear the want of it, not to be afraid in the dark, or to be alone, nor to be forward, peevish, and crying, as they generally are in other countries through the impatient care and fondness of those who look after them. Upon this account Spartan nurses were frequently hired by people of other countries; and it is reported that she who suckled *Alcibiades* was a Spartan."

After this the religious ceremonies fill each hour and day, for, strange as it may seem to us, these barbarians were more attentive to their gods than are we of to-day to ours.

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