



THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

The Hippocratic Oath is one of the sixty books composing the Hippocratic Collection, or the Corpus Hippocraticum, which was brought together and edited at the commencement of the third century B.C. by a group of Alexandrian scholars. The Oath is a historic and important document because it gives data relating to the constitution and teachings of the mystery of the Greek physicians, the Companions of Aesculapius. It reveals the moral obligations, which the members of the medical body took upon themselves in their relationship with their patients, and among themselves as well as with the community at large.

"I swear by Apollo the physician, by Aesculapius, Hygeia, and Panacea and I take to witness all the gods, all the goddesses, to keep according to my ability and my judgment the following Oath:

"To consider dear to me as my parents him who taught me this art;

to live in common with him and if necessary to share my goods with him;

to look upon his children as my own brothers, to teach them this art if they so desire without fee or written promise;

to impart to my sons and the sons of the master who taught me and the disciples who have enrolled themselves and have agreed to the rules of the profession, but to these alone, the precepts and the instruction.

I will prescribe the regimen for the good of my patients according to my ability and my judgment and never do harm to anyone.

To please no one will I prescribe a deadly drug, nor give advice, which may cause his death. Nor will I give a woman a pessary to procure abortion.

But I will preserve the purity of my life and my art.

I will not cut for stone, even for patients in whom the disease is manifest; I will leave this operation to be performed by practitioners (specialists in this art).

In every house where I come I will enter only for the good of my patients, keeping myself far from all intentional ill-doing and all seduction, and especially from the pleasures of love with women or with men, be they free or slaves.

All that may come to my knowledge in the exercise of my profession or outside of my profession or in daily commerce with men, which ought not to be spread abroad, I will keep secret and will never reveal.

If I keep this oath faithfully, may I enjoy my life and practise my art, respected by all men and in all times;

But, if I swerve from it or violate it, may the reverse be my lot."