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EDITORIALS

MOSAIC CIRCUMCISION

THE AMERICAN PRACTITIONER has been giving much space to the question of circumcision. Probably the majority of the profession approves of it as a sanitary measure. What is the matter, then? Why, simply look at the finger nails of the average mohel and both finger nails and teeth of the old fashioned mohel and the wonder will become purely a question of how do any children escape infection. My investigation in past years leads me to think that the Jewish race must be very resistant indeed to certain mixed cultures. Perhaps the miseries of Ghetto life may have brought an unlooked for but hard earned compensation.

Many medical friends, both Hebrew and Gentile, seem to be impressed with the idea that circumcision is a Mosaic rite. This is not true, for Moses opposed it even at the risk of his life, and would not circumcise any one. It was derived from Abraham, and Moses omitted and neglected its performance.

I have had this statement questioned by rabbi, priest and doctor, but have always made good upon it by reference to the records as they stand in the Hebrew and Greek scriptures.

This is what the records say: Christ states—Ye have not circumcision from Moses, but from the Fathers (Abraham). Moses refused to circumcise his own son, did not circumcise any of the hundreds of thousands of children born during the forty years in obgynhistory.net

the desert, and Joshua circumcised them all with stone knives. Stupid persons invariably jump to the conclusion that the rite was omitted because the people were marching all the time. The facts are: It took forty years to cross a four hundred mile desert; over a half million births (and funerals) occurred, and if the cloud abode the people stayed still "a day, a month, a year or a longer time."

That no mention is made of anything like sepsis when many hundred thousand adults and children were circumcised with stone knives rather confirms my experience that Jewish children are quite proof against the usual septic sequellae which dirty finger nails and unboiled instruments would lead one to anticipate.

As to the rite, that great lawgiver and sanitarian, Moses, would have none of it. He was versed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, quite a different thing from the practice of any Arabian rite. He must have marveled as we do—"How can a mohl (whose hands, we know, must show mixed and virulent cultures) tear up the preputial mucous membrane and the child escape infection." Substitute the word plague for infection and the idea will be clear, since there is small difference between a plague of sores and septicemia. That the child commonly does escape proves that the race is protected in some way from rock knives and dirty finger nails. Bacteriology has its supernatural, and this immunity is one of its miracles.

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