tients demand relief and the trouble is not alleviated by proper conservative treatment.

I have discussed this subject at such length because I feel that by my own studies I may possibly have contributed something toward directing other observers into those paths that may lead toward a more thorough understanding of one of the most interesting and difficult diseases that we are asked to treat.

I take pleasure in acknowledging my indebtedness to Miss Adele Oppenheimer, assistant in surgical pathology, Mount Sinai Hospital, for her valuable and efficient aid in collating many of the data on which I have drawn, and in thanking Dr. F. S. Mandlebaum, director the pathologic laboratory, for the preparation of the photomicrographs. Finally, thanks are due Drs. Lilienthal, Gerster, Sachs and the other members of the Mount Sinai attending staff, through whose generous cooperation a large part of the material for study became accessible to me.

63 East Ninetieth Street.

THE APPROPRIATE INSIGNIA FOR THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

SAMUEL P. GERHARD, A.M., M.D.
PHILADELPHIA

An emblem, to be appropriate, should be so devised as to convey a meaning suitable to the organization which carries it as a badge: therefore it seems strange that the American Medical Association should have adopted for its use the device of the red cross, which belongs to another organization and represents a character of work entirely different from that of the medical profession.

The American National Red Cross, through its executive committee, passed resolutions Oct. 18, 1907, which decided that by reason of an international agreement the emblem of the red cross was adopted to designate the personnel of sanitary corps, and was to be used in time of peace or war to protect sanitary formations, establishments and personnel and material.

Furthermore, in order that the emblem should be kept in its proper place, legislation has been recommended to prevent its use by private persons or by societies, and the executive committee has requested that all hospitals, health departments and like institutions kindly desist from the use of the red cross and suggests that some other insignia be substituted for it.

Some commercial houses which manufacture surgical necessities and appliances, together with some nostrums, print the red cross on their packages of kidney plasters, dog soap and dyspepsia medicines. There is a nurse's school which claims to teach nursing in a short term of a few weeks and calls the graduates "red cross nurses" who go out in competition with those who have served several years in hospitals.

In many of the large cities throughout the United States druggists are fond of naming their places "Red Cross Pharmacy." In New York and Chicago physicians have placed this symbol on their automobiles—whether this gives them more privileges than they would otherwise have is a question; it appears more as an advertisement than an explanation for speed. On state occasions some use it as a chevron on the sleeve, and sometimes the police think they have a right to it during large parades and wear it before the crowd.

There may, however, be raised the question of priority of use, inasmuch as the red cross was adopted by

the American Medical Association before the laws were passed, and therefore the latter has a perfect right to its use. This all may be true, but when we come to consider the objects of the Red Cross as originally set forth in 1864 we must concede that its use was not intended solely for the medical man but for all connected with the work of relief. Besides, we should be charitable enough to consider that we have appropriated an emblem devoted to humanitarian work.

What, then, is the proper badge of the medical profession?

In the United States Army the device of the surgeon is Mercury's wand, consisting of a rod surmounted by a pair of wings with two serpents twined about it. Carefully examining the literature on the subject of Mercury we learn many facts arguing against the use of this latter emblem in the healing art. We shall see that it belongs strictly to commerce and trade; the name "Mercury" itself is derived from the Latin *merx*, *mercis*—"goods." Mercury was the Roman divinity of commerce and gain; also *mercior*, to traffic, is from the same root; the word *mercatus* is akin to our English word "market," as is also the word *mercator*, "merchant."

Mercury, the Roman god, is identical with the Greek god Hermes and was considered the god of diplomacy, arts, sciences, commerce, gain and riches, especially of sudden and unexpected riches and of good luck at the games. He was usually represented with a purse in one hand, his magic caduceus in the other, and was supposed to preside over the commerce of the Romans.

The magic caduceus of Mercury is an evolution of the staff of Hermes, and the original caduceus or staff was an olive branch with garlands. Later ribbons were substituted for the garlands and finally mythologists transformed the ribbons and garlands into snakes, about which others, like Hyginus, invented various tales, one of them being that Hermes found two snakes fighting in a garden and, dividing them with his wand, chose this as a symbol of the quarrels which it was his duty to assist in settling. After a time a pair of wings was added to the staff to indicate the speed of Mercury as a divine messenger; it also became a symbol of power that produced wealth and was supposed to be an enchanted wand of prosperity.

Owing to the fact that Mercury's wand is used by the United States Army and by some medical publishers, and is to be placed on the ambulances of some New York hospitals, it would appear to be the proper emblem; but, studying the references which we have just gone over, we learn that it is more adapted to merchants, delivery wagons and steamships and is a commercial device. With the knowledge that the red cross and Mercury's wand are incorrect emblems, what, then, shall we consider the true insignia for the healing art?

The medical profession should be proud of the fact that a symbol has been handed down from ages past, though it was lost to some extent by those who forgot history and our traditions and desired something new for a device. The true ancestral symbol of the healing art is the knotty rod and serpent of Esculapius. Delving into the history of this symbol we find a veritable mine of facts which will convince us that we have a heritage worthy of our profession. It is customary to trace the history of medicine back to the story of Esculapius, whom the Greeks elevated to the position of the god of medicine. He was revered and worshipped

throughout Greece, but the great center of healing was at Epidaurus, where a beautiful temple was built to his honor in which his statue by the sculptor Thrasymedes stood. This statue, of gold and ivory, the head bearded and surrounded with rays, a knotty stick in one hand, the other entwined by a serpent, gives us the original symbol of the healing art.

Serpents of a peculiar kind were kept in the temples. Votive tablets also have been found on which the ailments were inscribed and which were similar to our hospital case records. No doubt Hippocrates, the "father of physic," gained much of his knowledge of medicine from these tablets, for some of his reputed writings and formulas, such as *Prorrhetica* or *Prædictiones* and *Coacoæ Prænotiones*, are very much like them. He was a descendant of the early Asclepiades and was said to be the nineteenth in descent from Esculapius. He inherited the instruction of his fathers though a long line of physicians and was well versed in the practice of his time.

Later on we find the Greek practitioners coming to Rome, and the practice of the Asclepiades came with them. According to the Roman law they were freedmen. After a time they established shops, on which they placed the sign of the Esculapian snake and practiced their art and sold medicine; the Romans called them *medicinæ*.

We learn from Ovid that on the occasion of the great plague in Rome, at the command of the Delphic oracle, B.C. 293, an embassy was sent to the temple of Esculapius at Epidaurus, whence was brought a living serpent which was received with great ceremony by the Romans. They built a temple on the Tiber and the serpent was placed therein.

Now let us glance at the sources of this serpent idea as found in the earlier times and the strange ramifications of the respect for the serpent among barbaric races. In the earliest civilized times we find that the Egyptians represented the eternal spirit "Kneph" as a serpent. Osiris in snake form was usually associated with health; the Chaldean *Hoa* was identical with the *Agatho-dæmon*, which the Hebrews, who were in Egypt for over four hundred years, learned to regard as the symbol of health and life. Thermuthis, the sacred asp, was associated with Isis, the goddess of life and healing.

The serpent's change of skin may have been suggestive of resurrection and renovation; he was feared because he was supposed to possess superhuman knowledge and power. His supposed longevity was, no doubt, the reason why this animal entwined about a staff was symbolic of health and the distinctive attribute of the classical Esculapius and Hygeia.

We find also that the Phenicians adored the serpent as a beneficent genius. The Hindoos had a serpent deity, Rudra, who was not only beautiful and strong but also the healer. The Druids had serpents in the sanctuary to bring good fortune. The Python of the Greeks in the temple of Apollo, described by Ovid, was all-powerful; the Celts, the Basques and all Asia had legends of the Orm and the Paystha pictured as a great dragon.

We are all familiar with the fables of St. Michael and St. George, and, turning to the Chinese, the winged dragon or serpent is a symbol of superior wisdom and power.

In the folk-lore of the Gauls and Germans the white snake, when boiled, was considered to have the attribute

of conferring wisdom in medicine. The white snake was also venerated by the Scottish highlanders, as well as by certain Arabian tribes, as a mighty agent and the king of all serpents.

Following this thought into America, let us learn what the Indians believe in this respect. The general idea among them is that it brings happiness. Professor Agassiz tells us that he found the Maues Indians, who live in Brazil, whenever they assign a form to any *remedio*, give it that of a serpent. Among the Lenape Indians their famous doctors were called "big snakes."

We must not forget to look into Holy Writ for the symbolical influence and intelligence of the serpent in the history of the fall of man, where it is stated, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field."

In the story of the Exodus we have many allusions to the serpent as a power for deliverance. Aaron's serpent rod is an instance. Also during the wanderings in the wilderness Moses placed a brazen serpent on a pole in the midst of the camp, which was preserved for many centuries, until the days of Hezekiah, when it was broken to pieces because it became an object of worship and tended to turn the people from their true God.

During the Christian era the serpent was employed to signify the virtue of prudence and wisdom; the disciples were admonished, "Be ye wise as serpents."

In the Latin church of the early days the pastoral staff terminated at the top with a serpent, indicating power and wisdom.

Whatever element of superstition or imagination may have been injected into these stories of mythology and the legends of more recent times, there is a wonderful history hidden behind them, all of which permeates the whole human race.

Man in his primitive state and in his more civilized life believes there was a superior power for good, and his mind, requiring a material expression of that unseen source, used the serpent as a symbol of power and wisdom. Without this the rod of Esculapius would be impotent over disease and the wand of Mercury would have no authority over trade or commerce. The cultured Greeks therefore, having great respect for the healing art, honored it with the most significant and expressive symbol of the highest attributes conducive to the welfare of the race.

Among the orientals the shepherd was considered the highest type of citizen, whose life in the open country brought him in contact with great struggles. The rod was the weapon with which he struck down the adversaries of the sheep; the staff or crook, however, was used for their guidance in the proper path on the trackless pastures. Hence we read in the beautiful pastoral song of the "shepherd king" these expressive words: "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The rod therefore became the symbol of a defending power which brought comfort and support to the weak in the consciousness that they were protected from all danger.

Esculapius was always pictured with a knotty rod in his hand, the knots indicating the many difficult problems of physic to be solved in the treatment of the ailments of mankind. Therefore, applying these thoughts to the symbol, we have in the entwined serpent, power, wisdom and health, together with the protection and support against disease and the difficulties to be overcome by the knotty rod. With this historical symbol the sanctity of medicine can be pictured and the doctor is shown in his true light, not only as a labora-

tory scientist and as a practitioner, but as a teacher and adviser to the patient, the family and the community in all the difficult problems that arise concerning health and disease.

This dissertation on the meaning of the medical emblem will suggest the appropriate insignia of the American Medical Association to be as follows: A shield on which is emblazoned the American eagle holding in its talons a laurel wreath within which is the knotty rod and entwined serpent and the letters A.M.A., of which a design is here submitted.

Suggested design for an emblem for the American Medical Association.

The explanation of the emblem so devised would be as follows: The eagle represents the national organization of the United States; the laurel wreath stands for the crown which the Romans bestowed on the healing art; the entwined serpent is indicative of power, wisdom and health, and the knotty rod signifies protection and support in the difficult problems of the treatment of disease.

SUMMARY

The insignia and device of the red cross belongs to another organization and its use is not proper for the medical profession. It represents a character of work entirely different.

From the fact that Mercury was the Roman god of trade and commerce and his magic caduceus was the symbol of authority over trade and commerce and was the enchanted wand of prosperity, it is not adapted to be an emblem for the healing art.

The knotty rod and serpent of Esculapius is the ancient inheritance of the medical profession, and the history of this symbol, together with its mythology and its legends, prove its appropriateness, for the reason that the serpent was considered by every race on the globe as a great power and man's mind used it as a symbol of wisdom and health.

The knotty rod is an expressive representation of support, protection and comfort in the difficult problems arising in the management of disease.

NOTE.—It may interest readers of this paper to consult some of the following authorities on the subject:

- Smith, William: Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology.
Niebuhr: History of Rome.
Harper's Dictionary of Classical History and Antiquities, and Encyclopædia Americana.
Walton: The Cult of Esculapius.
Brinton: The Myths of the New World.
Parke: Epitome of the History of Medicine.
Bulletin American National Red Cross, Nos. 1 and 2.
McClintock and Strong: Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature.
Wake: Serpent Worship.
Meyer: The Shepherd Psalm.
Dunglison: History of Medicine.
Blair and Crawford: Design.

639 North Sixteenth Street.

Importance of Dental Orthopedics.—F. A. Gough (*Amer. Jour. Obstet.*, April) states that though parents desire that their children have good permanent teeth, few realize the importance of saving the deciduous teeth till their mission is accomplished.

Clinical Notes

ACUTE PECTORAL (THORACIC, ANTERIOR AXILLARY) LYMPHADENITIS FROM CUTANEOUS INFECTIONS OF THE LOWER LATERAL CHEST AND UPPER ABDOMINAL WALL

WALTER M. BRICKNER, M.D.

Assistant Adjunct Surgeon, Mount Sinai Hospital
NEW YORK

Based on the observation of three cases, I published the following editorial note in the *American Journal of Surgery*, April, 1906:

A tender, painful swelling just at or beyond the upper, outer border of the breast, and near the edge of the pectoralis major, is usually an inflamed lymphatic gland. In its presence it is well to look for some skin infection about the waist line, e. g., furuncles, which are not rare at this site as a result of irritation by the corset. *Per contra*, with a boil, abscess, dermatitis or other infection at or above the waist line, one may be on the lookout for glandular enlargement at the point referred to.

Fig. 1.—Photograph showing pectoral adenitis, and location of furuncle causing it.

Two similar cases have since come under my care. All five of the patients were women. In four the exciting lesion was a furuncle, and suppuration slowly developed in the glands; in the other case infection of a superficial burn over the lower costal cartilages caused the lymphadenitis, which resolved without suppuration. Four of the patients had previously consulted other physicians, who had regarded the thoracic swellings as neoplasms.

The patient from whom the accompanying photograph (Fig. 1) was made presented herself recently at the Mount Sinai Hospital Dispensary, with the statement that the hard swelling in the right anterior axillary line, above the breast, had been developing for three weeks. She said that at two clinics the diagnosis of cancer had been made and radical operation advised. The assistant who first examined her at the Mount Sinai Hospital Dispensary was also inclined to look on