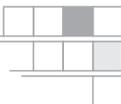


Correspondence — Is “Caduceus” a Proper Name for the Society Newspaper? I

Alexander Cannon

1928 Volume 7 Issue 1



21st February, 1928

The Editor,

CADUCEUS

University of Hong Kong.

Dear Sir,

The Caduceus has made great strides, during the past year, and there is no question that it will make a still greater advance. However, there is no question to be a certain drawback in its title, which literally means “The wand or staff carried by Mercury.” Now, Mercury was “The herald and messenger of the gods, protector of herdsmen, and PATRON OF ROGUES.” It will be observed that however good the staff may be, it must be remembered that its most historical career lay in the hands of this “rogue” and hence its value is much questioned and criticized in many circles. It is true that I might place upon this wand the best interpretation possible, as translated from the original Greek Myths, the particular Myth being, “how Apollo got his Lyre.” The Apollo, in return for the gift of the wonderful lyre, gave Mercury a golden wand, called the caduceus, which had power over sleep and dreams, and wealth and happiness. At a later time two wings fluttered from top of this wand, and two golden snakes were turned round it.”

I wonder if it ever occurred to the originator of this title, exactly what its real meaning was, and what limitations and drawbacks it incurred? Punch might interpret such a translation as the caduceus being the weapon used by a rogue, which although humourous in some aspects, is disastrous in others. I have heard of many lawyers being classed as “rogues.” Perhaps, after all, there is some element of truth in these myths, as it has been stated that liars and rogues go together, as the birds of a feather flock together: many medical men and lawyers think and act alike, and many families have a notorious

singularity in containing brothers who are doctors and lawyers. I feel sure, that perhaps after all this is by no means the whole truth.

A more suitable title would be Hong Kong Medical Journal (affiliating the University and Official Societies of the Medical Profession). This title would make known unto all, the aim and uses of such a Journal, which would no doubt, endow it with a lasting success, and dignified popularity, and with a familiarity which will not breed contempt.

A word to the wise is sufficient!

I am etc.,

ALEXANDER CANNON.