

made use of the herb to restore dead men to life. From which we may infer that even in the earliest times there was a popular belief that what would cure serpents was equally useful for man, and that experiments upon animals were quite proper—though in this case the animal was a dead one. The healing god is usually represented leaning upon a snake-entwined staff. The exact meaning of the latter is not quite clear. It may be taken as a symbol of early faith in the efficacy of animal experiments; or the association may have arisen from the idea that serpents represent prudence and renovation, and have the power of discovering the secret virtues of healing plants. In the sacred books of the East there is a reference to the point as follows: "As sickness comes from him, from him too must or may come the healing."

When Aesculapius began to raise from the dead his serious troubles began. Zeus feared that men might gradually escape death altogether. Pluto complained that by such medical treatment the number of the dead was too much diminished. So Zeus in his anger killed both patient and physician with the usual thunderbolt; as Pindar says, the "bright lightning dealt them down"—perhaps the first example of the physician sacrificing himself for his patient. Then, the story goes, Apollo was in great grief, for by this time he was quite ready to acknowledge his distinguished son, and wandered away to the land of the Hyperboreans, where he shed tears of gold. He appealed to Zeus to make Aesculapius immortal, and so the god of medicine was placed among the stars. While he was on earth his wife was Epione, the meaning of which is the soother. Perhaps she was a nurse. Homer mentions Podalirius and Machaon as sons of Aesculapius, and the following are also said to have been sons and daughters: Janiscus, Alexenor, Aratus, Hygeia, Aegle, Iaso and Panacea. Some of these, as, for example, Hygeia, the goddess of health, and Panacea, the "all-healing," are merely personifications of the powers ascribed to the father.

Such are the legends of Aesculapius. There can be little doubt that facts are the basis of the Aesculapian story, for the divinity was worshipped throughout the whole of Greece, ex-