

CROTALUS HORRIDUS

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The venom of *Crotalus* is most terrifying in its action. From the many accounts of poisoning in the *Cyclopedia of Drug Pathogenesis* and other sources, I found the most dramatic the description of the deliberate poisoning of Mariano Jose Machado, who was supposed to get cured from Lepra through a bite by *Crotalus*, but unfortunately died from the venom in 21½ hours. This story is to be read in Dr. B. Mure's *Materia Medica* or provings of the principal animal and vegetable poisons of the Brazilian Empire, New York, 1854. It was in this little book where I found the best proving of *Crotalus*. From the drug picture *Crotalus* is known to cause general disorganization of the blood, both the anti-coagulating and coagulating actions are seen. "Hæmorrhages of dark blood from any part of the body, lack of coagulation of blood, recurrent septic eruptions with black-bluish hæmorrhagic discoloration of the skin." The modalities and many of the other symptoms are similar to *Lachesis*, which is generally better known and much wider used. Several authors state that *Lachesis* is a left-sided drug, whilst *Crotalus* is alleged to work better on the right side. I am not able to confirm this assertion, although I agree that *Lachesis* is a predominantly left-sided medicine; *Crotalus* works equally well on both sides, and when counting the right and the left in Dr. Mure's proving, I find the relationship to be 9: 7, which is in no way conclusive for a one-sided action. There are many indications to use *Crotalus* but, as far as I remember, I used it almost exclusively for conditions in connection with thrombosis and phlebitis. There are some cases where I used for various reasons anti-coagulant (Dindevan) treatment, and I must admit that it gave quite satisfactory results. Although it is a great satisfaction to find the individual medicine of a patient, I think homœopathic treatment in cases of thrombophlebitis is not as indispensable any more as it used to be. We must reassess

the place of Homœopathy again and again, otherwise we may lose touch with everyday medicine.

Here are a few cases.

Mrs. Ch. T., aged 65, came to the surgery complaining of pains in the left leg. She had an extensive thrombophlebitis of the superficial vein in the left calf. She had been already on *Crataegus* for myocardial degeneration, shortness of breath, palpitation, and swelling of her ankles at night. All those symptoms were well controlled by *Crataegus*, but now she did not feel well, was unable to walk on account of the pain in the leg and complained of tightness in the chest, hot flushes and general restlessness. *Crotalus 6*, three drops in a teaspoonful of water every four hours was prescribed, and she was told to go to bed. After three days she was seen at home and was very much better, and was allowed to get up. She was very well for four weeks, when she developed thrombophlebitis in the right leg. This cleared up with the same prescription, and she has not had any recurrence for one year, up to today.

Mr. H. N., 60 years old, called me in to see him and complained of severe pains in the left leg, inability to stand on the left leg and a rise of his temperature. He was very sensitive to touch and pressure over the left calf, where one could feel about five inches of hardened vein. The pain was worse from bending his foot upwards, and the general picture was one of superficial and deep thrombosis and phlebitis. There were no other impressive symptoms and he got *Crotalus 6*, as the case before. The response was very good. The next day he reported less pain, after two days his temperature came down to normal and after another two days I was hardly able to feel the thrombosed vein and he was able to stand on his leg. He returned to work and had no recurrence up to now, for three years.

Mrs. S. B., aged 58, who had recurrent attacks of thrombophlebitis, had been suffering from varicose veins for over fifteen years. She was normally wearing an elastic stocking and had several times had *Lachesis* during her menopause, whilst *Pulsatilla* was her constitutional medicine. Mrs. B. had a very severe attack of thrombosis and phlebitis and called me in after she had taken *Lachesis* and *Pulsatilla* for some days without

any improvement. *Lachesis*, which was indicated, was repeated, but did not make any impression on her condition. On *Crotalus* 6, three drops four-hourly she recovered in two to three days. She is aware of her tendency to recurrent attacks of thrombophlebitis, but since she has been taking *Crotalus* with the first appearance of any symptoms, she has not had any serious attack where I had to see her.

Dr. Mure writes in his provings, "It is my belief that it (*Crotalus*) affects the organism longer and more thoroughly than *Lachesis*, and will affect many cures which had to remain incomplete under the use of *Lachesis*."

Mr. H. E., a cook, aged 64, was suffering from hypertension and very extensive varicose veins. During the last fourteen years he had many attacks of thrombophlebitis. He was always prescribed *Crotalus* and was able to get out of bed after four to five days; apart from *Crotalus* he had an occasional dose of *Sulphur* 30 as his constitutional medicine. Last year he started again with a very severe attack of phlebitis of the right vena saphena, and I put him on *Crotalus* before I left for my holiday. The right side cleared up, but the left vena saphena got thrombosed and inflamed to such an extent that my locum had him admitted to hospital. He spent four weeks in hospital and had three weeks of anti-coagulant treatment.

Mrs. L. B., aged 42, was suffering from varicose veins for some time and came one evening to my surgery with extensive varicose eczema, one large varicose ulcer and thrombophlebitis higher up on the same leg. She was ordered to bed and got *Crotalus*. After four days she was so much better that I could apply a Viscopaste bandage, and on the fifth day she was able to walk about. She is now wearing an elastic stocking, and the eczema responds to occasional doses of *Lachesis*, *Crotalus* and *Nitric-acid*.

Mrs. A. G., aged 64, had a fall and suffered from a large hæmatoma over the left shin bone; she came to the surgery and had a painfully inflamed swelling of the size of a small peach on the left leg, and the surrounding skin was dark red and mottled, whilst the lower part of the leg was swollen from œdema. Mrs. G. had two different kinds of ointment, which

did not make any impression on her or the painful swelling. When she came again, about four weeks after the accident, and had still the same complaints, I put her on *Crotalus* 6, four-hourly. Within a few days the "tumour" started to discharge dark bluish fluid and the swelling went down and the inflammation cleared up.

There are many more cases, the details of which I do not remember, and as most of them were seen at their homes, I did not make any notes in their records. In many cases I could have used *Lachesis* as well, but *Crotalus* worked so convincingly in the majority of my cases that the diagnosis thrombophlebitis produces almost a reflex *Crotalus horridus* with me.

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