

LACHESIS

D. W. E.

A recent article in *Homœopathy* which dealt with the drug pictures of LACHESIS and TARANTULA gave the name of the snake from which the venom was collected as *Lachesis trigonocephalus*.

There has been some doubt in the distant past about the true nomenclature of the snake originally caught by Dr. Constantine Hering, and much has been written on the subject in the early homœopathic publications and magazines.

At the turn of the century, largely because the academic naming of snakes was somewhat muddled, to say the least, the most important outcome of this lack in positive identification was that many believed that Hering may have used the *Lachesis lanceolatus* snake, more correctly named *Bothrops lanceolatus*, the BOTHROPS of the present-day homœopath, the correct present-day name for which is *Trimeresurus lanceolatus*.

The consensus of opinion expressed in the several homœopathic pharmacopœia is that it was *Lachesis mutus*, as follows:

The British Homœopathic Pharmacopœia states "The habitation, S. America, and general description agree best with *Lachesis mutus* or *Curucucu*."

The Homœopathic Pharmacopœia of the United States states "Much difficulty, however, exists in identifying the exact species referred to by Dr. Hering, and from the general description given and the common name applied, it is a question whether the provings were not made from the *Lachesis mutus*, or the *Craspedocephalus lanceolatus*, rather than from the *Trigonocephalus lachesis*."

The American Homœopathic Pharmacopœia states categorically that "*Lachesis mutus* was the specimen used by Dr. Hering."

The modern specific name of the snake is LACHESIS MUTA, the *Surucuccu* or *Bushmaster* of S. America, belonging to the family Viperidæ and sub-family Crotalinæ. A very unpleasant,

vicious snake growing to some 6 to 7 feet in length predominantly brown coloured with darker brown diamond-shaped markings along the back, each diamond enclosing two light brown coloured spots.

Lachesis trigonocephalus, on the other hand, is a small, bright green, nocturnal tree-climbing snake, a native of Ceylon, more properly known nowadays as *Trimeresurus trigonocephalus*.

It seems unlikely the venom was collected from this latter snake and many experts have confirmed that the venom for the homœopathic remedy LACHESIS was actually taken from the *Bushmaster*, *Lachesis muta*.

The following records the current naming of the above snakes as they are found in Homœopathic Materia Medica.

LACHESIS: *Lachesis muta*.

Synonyms: *Lachesis mutus*, *Crotalus mutus*, *Bushmaster*, *Surucuccu*, *Curucuc*, (and *Lachesis trigonocephalus* in error).

BOTHROPS: *Bothrops atrox*.

Synonyms: *Trimeresurus lanceolatus*, *Bothrops lanceolatus*, *Laohesis lanceolatus*, *Coluber atrox*, *Yellow Viper*, *Fer-de-lance*.

Messrs. A. Nelson & Co. Ltd. have finally clarified this problem and possess the actual specimens at their address should occasion necessitate further investigation.

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