

**DR. B. MURE'S MATERIA MEDICA OR,
PROVINGS OF THE PRINCIPAL ANIMAL
AND VEGETABLE
POISONS OF THE BRAZILIAN EMPIRE,
AND THEIR APPLICATION IN THE
TREATMENT OF DISEASE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649185283

Dr. B. Mure's *Materia medica* or, Proving of the principal animal and vegetable poisons of the Brazilian Empire, and their application in the treatment of disease by Charles J. Hempel

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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CHARLES J. HEMPEL

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MATERIA MEDICA,

OR

Proviings of the principal Animal and Vegetable Poisons

OF THE

BRAZILIAN EMPIRE;

AND THEIR APPLICATION IN THE TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

AND

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO

HAHNEMANN'S METHOD,

BY

CHARLES J. HEMPEL, M.D.

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COLLEGE; HONORARY MEMBER OF THE HAHNEMANN SOCIETY OF
LONDON, &C., &C.

NEW-YORK:

WILLIAM RADDE, No. 322 BROADWAY,
PHILADELPHIA: RADEMACHER & SHEEK.—BOSTON: OTIS CLAPP.—
ST. LOUIS: J. G. WESSELMOEFT.—LONDON: JAMES EPPS,
112 GREAT RUSSELL-STREET, BLOOMSBURY.—MANCHESTER:
H. TURNER, 41 PICCADILLY.

1854.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853, by
WILLIAM RADDE,
In the Clerk's Office, of the District Court, for the Southern District of
New-York.

HENRY LUDWIG, Printer,
45 Vesey-street.

TO THE
BRAZILIAN PEOPLE.

THOUGH the precious metals hidden in the Brazilian soil, may be never so abundant; though the splendor of its precious stones, may be never so brilliant; though the crops which the soil yields to the farmer, may be never so rich: yet there are, in the Brazilian empire, treasures of a far greater importance, and infinitely more necessary to human happiness. They are the powerful means which this vast country furnishes for the cure of disease.

Previous to Hahnemann's discovery, we were ignorant of a positive method of determining the use of drugs. We knew that they existed, but we did not know how to use them; and popular experience, more successful than the wisdom of the School, had alone picked up a few stray fragments from the rich harvest which had been abandoned for want of the proper means of gathering. Providence at last permitted Hahnemann and his disciples to discover the method of applying remedies to diseases in a positive and efficacious manner. The dominion of mere palliatives is at an end.—Homœopathy, by attacking the cause of disease, destroys the chronic miasms, which are transmitted from generation to generation; dries up the fountain-heads of epidemic and contagious diseases; enables the infant-body, by a positive hygiene, to resist the deleterious influences to which it might be exposed in the course of its existence; and, by preserving human life, which is the most precious capital of nations and the first element of their greatness, Homœopathy will insure their prosperity, provided they adopt it without reserve.

We admire the bold hunter who skims the sharp points of the rocks, for the purpose of snatching the down from the little ones of the eider; the indefatigable diver, who, by dint of patient toil, succeeds in bringing up the diamond from the sands of the river, or the pearl from the bosom of the sea. Should not the people of Brazil sympathise with the patient and courageous experimenters, who, under the auspices of Hahnemann, discover a world of wonderful uses in the neglected products of this country?

The work which we here offer to the Brazilian people, is not a work of fiction intended to amuse, but a serious work detailing a series of painful sensations voluntarily endured by a few devoted men, who were desirous of finding out the therapeutic uses of the poisonous animals and plants, the pathogenetic symptoms of which will be found described in this volume. We shall be amply compensated for the patience and devotedness which the composition of such a work requires, by the consciousness that it will do its share in diminishing the sufferings of mankind.

B. MURE, *Rio Janeiro.*

NOTE TO THE READER:—The symptoms in the following work, are arranged in groups of five; the figures in the text indicate the numerical order of these groups.—Ed.

CROTALUS CASCAVELLA.



We commence the publication of our provings by the symptoms of the *Crotalus Cascavella*, not so much on account of the importance of the symptoms which the poison of this dangerous reptile produces on the healthy body; but because the unfortunate experiment which was attempted a few years ago, on a sick person, offers a fair opportunity of contrasting the hazardous and uncertain results of a merely clinical experimentation, with the positive advantages of Hahnemann's method of proving.

A popular notion,—and the therapeutics of the Old-School was gradually built up of such notions,—attributed to the poison of the *crotalus cascavella*, the power of curing the elephantiasis of the Greeks, a malady which, in Brazil, goes by the name of *morphea*, or *Lazarus'evil*. A disciple of Hahnemann might have verified this belief without any

difficulty, and without endangering human life. But the Old-School who does not acknowledge our method of proving, had to remain in doubt about this curative virtue of the cascavella, until a patient and physician would be found sufficiently bold and logical to apply to a frightful disease a still more frightful remedy. Mariano José Machado, fell a victim to his heroic attempt, and, by his death, dissipated the illusory hopes founded on the curative virtue of the poison of the cascavella. Now what conclusion shall we draw from this fact? That the practitioner who advised the attempt, has been imprudent and censurable? God forbid that we should commit such an act of injustice. A patient has succumbed to a clinical experiment; let us honor the heroic courage with which he braved the serpent's bite; let us honor the zeal of the practitioner, who persuaded him to risk a few years of a loathsome existence for the chance, though uncertain, of a cure. The unhappy Machado has been saved a few years of cruel suffering; but what a joy it would have afforded him and his miserable fellow-sufferers, if the remedy for their loathsome disease had been known! what a glory it would have been to the physician who should have conducted them to the haven of relief! *

* This case has been reported in detail, in the Medical Gazette of Paris, of the 5th of January, 1839, by the attending physicians, *Maia* and *Reis*. We transcribe it for the benefit of our readers.

Mariano José Machado, fifty years old, of athletic form, bilious-sanguine temperament, was afflicted with elephantiasis leontina Alibert. The whole body, especially the extremities, were insensible. The skin and the cellular tissue were thickened, hard, rugose and covered with tubercles which were somewhat raised but not ulcerated. A few pustules under the arms, looked like itch-pustules, and seemed to indicate a complication with this disease. The epidermis and nails began to alter, and the fingers had lost their normal shape. Internally, the patient felt quite well, enjoying both vigor of mind and body. After six years of suffering, he had come to the determination to try this dreadful experiment, which would either lead to death or a deliverance from his horrible affliction.

On the morning of the fourth of September, at fifty minutes past eleven o'clock, he was bit by a rattle-snake, the *crotalus cascavella*, in

However, a homicide has been committed on this occasion, and though the perpetrators may be free from blame,

the two last fingers near the metacarpus. He felt neither the bite, nor the poison as it penetrated into the wound. A few drops of blood came out of the wound, and the hand began immediately to swell.—In five minutes: slight feeling of coldness in the hands.—Twelve o'clock: slight pain in the hollow of the hands.—Twenty minutes: the hand swells a good deal.—Thirty minutes: swelling of the jugular veins. Alteration of the features. Formication in the face.—Fifty-five minutes: the sense of swelling extends through the whole forearm.—Twenty minutes past one: trembling of the whole body.—Thirty-six minutes past one: the head is affected, with frequent pulse, difficulty of moving the lips, disposition to slumber, constriction of the throat, violent pain in the whole arm, the hand swells more and more.—Thirty-eight minutes past one: sense of chilliness; the patient covers himself.—Forty-eight minutes past one: pain in the tongue and larynx, increased pains and swelling of the bitten hand; sense of coldness in the feet.—Twenty-five minutes past two: difficulty of swallowing,—anguish,—copious sweat on the chest.—Fifty minutes: weakness of the arms,—nosebleed,—anguish, now and then,—restlessness,—pulse 96.—In three hours and forty minutes: pulse 100.—Fifteen minutes: intensely violent pains in the arms,—restlessness.—Thirty minutes: pulse 98,—red face,—continual bleeding of the nose.—Thirty-five minutes: the patient drinks some wine and water without any difficulty, and changes his linen which was all wet from the perspiration.—Intense redness all over.—In four hours: pulse 100,—the whole of the skin, especially on the bitten arm, is very red,—violent pains in both arms, which do not leave the patient any rest,—constriction of the throat,—impeded respiration.—Fifty minutes: pulse 104,—the body is very hot all over,—flow of saliva.—In five hours, thirty minutes: torpor,—copious emission of urine,—thick, viscid saliva, which it is difficult to get out of the mouth,—muscular debility,—frequent moaning on account of the pains which he feels in the whole body,—quiet breathing,—pulse full and frequent, skin soft,—the bitten hand swells enormously.—In seven hours: somnolence with moaning,—after waking the pains in the arms are less, but he experiences violent pains in the chest,—sensation of a lump in his throat,—copious emission of urine,—great difficulty of swallowing, white, viscid saliva,—discharge of a bloody liquid from the nose,—inability to swallow a drink composed of water, sugar and brandy.—In eight hours: the sweating abates,—restlessness,—moaning,—emission of urine.—In nine hours, ten minutes: the moaning ceases,—deep sleep.—In ten hours: takes an infusion of guaco,—pulse 108,—the bloody discharge from the nose ceases,—shrivelling of the tuberculous formations on the arms and in the face, they exhibit an erysipelatous