

Snake Venom Yields Remedy For Haemophilia, "Disease of Kings"

British Researchers Find Way to Stop Bleeding Immediately. Claimed Discovery Will Save Many Lives.



The deadly venom of snakes will be used in the battle against a deadly disease. The "curse of kings" has wrecked dynasties. Right, is the former Czarevitch, son of the last Russian Czar, with his mother. Centre, GREGORY RASPUTIN, the monk, whose claim to heal-

ing the sickly Prince of the awful bleeding malady gave him almost complete power at court and swept Russia to the revolution. Left, ex-King ALFONSO of Spain. Knowledge that all his sons were afflicted with haemophilia is said to have been a factor in his exile.

By CHARLES A. SMITH,
Central Press Canadian Correspondent

London.—At last a successful treatment for haemophilia, long the incurable "disease of kings," apparently has been found.

Ironically there now is available to any commoner the remedy for which the late Nicholas II of Rus-

sia and the exiled Alfonso XIII of Spain offered fortunes in vain.

Researches conducted jointly at St. Bartholomew's Hospital here and at the London Zoo have established that the venom of India's most poisonous viper, when applied to men and women, stops bleeding.

Writing in the "Lancet," organ of the British medical profession, Dr. R. G. Macfarlane of Bartholomew's and Burgess Barnett of the London Zoo stated that snake venoms were obtained from nearly all the poisonous snakes at the zoo and were used in their experiments.

The most striking results came from an Indian snake, called "Russell's Viper," which clotted haemophilic blood in seventeen seconds. The venom was diluted 100,000 and still stopped bleeding in 60 seconds. Even when diluted a trillion times it was effective to a degree.

Bleeding was stopped immediately in twenty cases of dental and tonsil operations. Bleeding in haemophilia was stopped successfully in six cases. No ill-effects were caused to the patients, the venom first being sterilized by secret process.

The discovery, in the view of medical circles here, is figured to save the lives of hundreds of victims of the mysterious haemophilia, which is transmitted by mothers only to their sons.

"Bleeders," as they are called, are liable to bleed to death from the tiniest scratch or even from the removal of a tooth. This is due to the failure of their blood to clot, and so stem the flow and knit the edges of the wound together. The walls of their blood vessels are extremely thin and are punctured by the slightest blow.

The ailment's deadly nature was brought sharply before public attention this summer when Don Gonzalos, one of the younger sons of ex-King Alfonso of Spain, died in Central Europe from internal hemorrhage caused by slight injuries received in an auto accident. The ordinary person would have survived the hurts.

The sons of the King of Spain have had the shadow of similar deaths hanging over them, as have all male members of royal houses stemming from the Grand Ducal House of Hesse. From this house it was transmitted to the Czarevitch of Russia through his mother.

Historians have suggested that Russia would not have a Soviet Government today if the czarevitch had not been a sufferer from haemophilia. When the great physicians in Europe had been summoned to Moscow or St. Petersburg to attend the last heir

to the Romanoff throne, without relieving the czarevitch's ailment, the conscience-stricken queen turned to "miracle men" in hopes of effecting a cure. One of them, Gregory Rasputin, gained entree to the court and rose to power through his apparent ability to bring relief to the czarevitch. With the corrupt Rasputin holding sway over the queen, the Romanoff dynasty moved rapidly to disaster, for the queen dominated the weak czar.

The fall of Alfonso of Spain, now in exile in Italy, was hastened by popular knowledge that all his sons were afflicted and the continuance of the dynasty dependent upon invalids.

Countless other royal tragedies in Europe, where dynasties are closely entwined, have been caused by haemophilia, and archives of European ruling houses contain numerous stories as dramatic as that recently revealed by Princess Radziwill concerning the grandmother of the afflicted czarevitch.

Lt.-Col. R. H. Elliot, noted British pathologist and former lecturer in ophthalmology at the London school of tropical medicine, was responsible for starting the researches which led to the discovery that valuable drugs could be produced from venom.

"Over thirty years ago," Elliot explains, "I was struck by the fact that snake-venom was obviously both very complex and very powerful. It is not one poison, but a number of poisons, any one of which, if isolated, would be sufficient to kill a man or animal."

"I talked the matter over with Dr. Burgess Barnett, who has at his command the great resources of the reptile house of Regent's Park (London) Zoo, who has helped me in other such matters before. The idea attracted him."

"With the assistance of another medical man, an expert in pathology, he set to work, and has been able to manufacture from snake poison a product which there is good reason to hope has robbed a greatly dreaded disease of much of its terrors."

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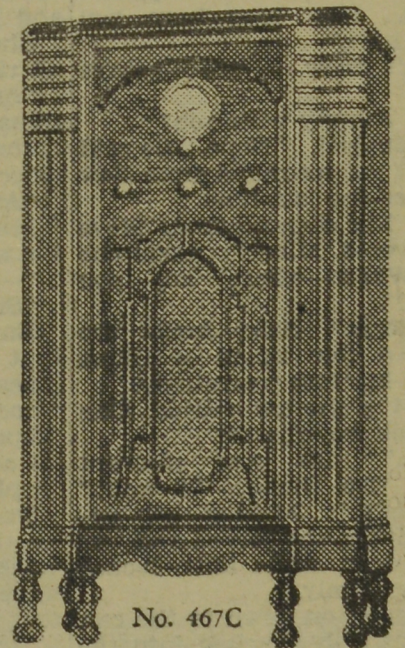
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