

No. XXXIII.—MR. BHANAGAY'S SNAKE CHART.

My attention has been drawn to a chart for the identification of harmless and poisonous snakes, compiled and being offered for sale for use in hospitals and dispensaries, by one Sub-Assistant Surgeon Bhanagay, Amraoti, C. P. The first thing to attract attention is that all the figures used to illustrate his text have been cribbed from the chart compiled by the Bombay Natural History Society and now sanctioned by Government for use in Military and other hospitals. No permission has been given by our Society for the use of these figures, and no acknowledgments are made as to the source from which they have been taken.

A study of Mr. Bhanagay's text shows that he has freely cribbed from the text of our Society's chart. Where he departs from this, he almost invariably falls into error. For instance the anal shield of Russell's Viper (*Vipera russelli*) is stated to be divided, and the sea-snakes (*Hydrophiinae*) are shown among those snakes that have broad ventral shields! But there are other glaring errors.

In order to test Mr. Bhanagay's knowledge of the subject, I wrote a letter to him which I asked a friend of mine to sign, and submitted a poisonous snake viz., *Ancistrodon hypnale*, from Ceylon, to him for report. I pointed out that according to his chart the specimen appeared to be harmless, but I would like his confirmation of this, and also would like to know the name of the snake, which I told him had been killed in my compound in Karachi. In due course Mr. Bhanagay sent the following reply:—

"Dear Sir,

As far as I could make out the specimen seems to be a common tree snake—*Dipsadomorphus gokool*."

Mr. Bhanagay therefore failed to recognise this very perfect specimen as a pit viper, or a poisonous snake at all, but pronounced it a harmless species. *Dipsadomorphus gokool* I may mention is only found in Eastern Bengal, Assam and Burma, many hundreds of miles from Karachi. It has not even a superficial resemblance to *Ancistrodon hypnale* and the lepidosis of the two is strikingly different, *gokool* has 21 scale rows, *hypnale* 17. In *gokool* the vertebrae are enlarged, in *hypnale* not. In *gokool* the ventrals number 224 to 232, in *hypnale* 136 to 157 (149 in this specimen). In *gokool* the subcaudals number 87 to 101, in *hypnale* 30 to 47 (41 in this specimen). In *gokool* there are eight supralabials, the third, fourth and fifth touching the eye, in *hypnale* there are seven, none of which touch the eye. In *gokool* there is no loreal pit, in *hypnale* there is a pit. These are only some of the more important differences. It is obvious that Mr. Bhanagay has not a very profound knowledge of Indian snakes, and our Members would be well advised not to consult his chart, which is misleading.

KARACHI,

23rd December 1922.

F. WALL,

COLONEL, I.M.S.

[The Inspector-General, Civil Hospitals, Central Provinces, has, on our bringing this matter to his notice, advised Mr. Bhanagay to withdraw his misleading chart.—EDITORS.]

No. XXXIV.—SNAKES AND LEECHES.

I was specially interested in the note in this journal (Vol. XXVIII, p. 557) by Mr. Kinloch. The only other instance known to me of leeches attaching themselves to snakes was mentioned in my article on the Copper-headed Rat Snake (*Coluber radiatus*) in this journal (Vol. XXIII, p. 209). In my case the leeches were aquatic, some species of horse leech I presume. I found two, bloated with blood, in the mouth of the specimen referred to in Assam. Mr. Kinloch's observa-



Wall, Frank. 1923. "Snakes and Leeches." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 29, 302–302.

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