

continuous, but an interval in front allows a tube to be seen through which the snake can emit a strong strident hiss. Through this too issues its tongue, of a dark reddish brown, ending in two sharp points like the sting of a large wasp. This it can vibrate with very great speed, and so stirs up the active properties of its poison, which grows more pungent and subtle.

This poison is a yellowish fluid, acid and volatile, held in the vesicles which cover its two chief fangs. These are always immersed in the fluid, which as they strike they mix with the blood. Their bite is so quick and light as to be hardly felt, but the part begins at once to swell, the man grows pale, and then livid, as the poison clogs the veins. In a few hours he is seized with a deadly lethargy, accompanied by nausea and depression: then a general sense of oppression, followed by tremors and convulsions. The circulation gets gradually feebler, and at last the blood is wholly congealed, and the man dies.

This terrible reptile is generally killed by a tiny insect. The snake lives among stones, shady rocks and in damp soil; here it is attacked, usually on the back, by a very small red ant, which pierces the skin, burrows through its vitals and destroys it.

Cypriots believe that the herb called sow-thistle (*cicerbita* or *sonchus oleraceus*) can neutralise the asp's bite. Several villagers of Kythrea saw a toad come out of a stream and proceed to feed on an asp which lay dead on the bank. From time to time it went to eat of a plant which grew hard by. The men rooted up the plant to watch how its loss would affect the toad. This animal, after eating again of the asp, sought its usual antidote, and when it could not find it grew wild and troubled, at last a kind of convulsion threw it on its back, and in a few minutes it was dead. This does not of course prove that the sow-thistle is a complete antidote to the bite of the asp, but it leads us to believe that the skin and flesh of the