

There are two kinds of leeches recognized by dealers—namely, the green leech (*Sanguisuga officinalis*) and the speckled or brown leech. (*S. medicinalis*). Our native species belongs to the latter. Sometimes it is difficult to detect any characteristic difference between the green and speckled leeches, and by many eminent naturalists they are supposed to be one species. The former is a native of the South of Europe, and is frequently called the "Hungary Leech," from its being extensively exported from that country. The American pharmacists use a very distinct species (*S. decora*). Our officinal leeches may be distinguished by one having a spotted yellow belly, the other is not speckled, but of a greenish yellow.

Leeches are not now so much thought of as in the days of our forefathers. This probably is the reason why we find so little knowledge respecting their habits and employment amongst chemists. If they were more frequently called for by customers, so as to become a profitable branch of the trade, their use and habits would be more studied. The leech, as is well known, is employed only to subtract blood in some local part and in small quantities. The narrowest end or part contains the mouth, the broad and flat end is merely a sucker to hold on to the skin.

The mouth is a triangular aperture furnished with from seventy to ninety teeth, very minute, certainly, but called teeth by naturalists. By means of these the skin is broken, whilst a continual sawing-like motion is experienced when the creature is sucking up the blood. It is thought the mouth keeps open the wound whilst sucking, but this is only conjectural; probably it acts upon the same principle as a sponge. The physician, when ordering his patient to apply leeches, should mark out the exact spot where they are to be placed with pen and ink, for sometimes ignorant persons, especially when applying them to the abdomen, allow them to wander about and suck anywhere, but if the place is marked out they would be more careful. The proverbial impossibility of making a horse drink against its will applies equally to leeches. It is at times difficult to persuade them to bite; even when they are induced it is, perhaps, only for a few seconds, and they wander away again. This may arise from several causes. It may be the blood is so impure that directly it is tasted the leech refuses to suck any more; this, however, is seldom the cause. If the skin is at all unclean it is useless to apply them. The chemist who sells the leeches should be careful to inform the applicant of this fact; it will save much annoyance. The part should first be well sponged with warm water, then rubbed with a little milk. Sometimes it is well just to gently prick the part with a fine needle, or to rub a small quantity of blood over the skin. I have also seen milk and sugar used with good effect. In cold weather, before applying leeches, they should be placed in warm water about 75° Fahr.—if a tablespoonful of beer is mixed with the water all the better—then for a few minutes allow them to