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✓ Original Communications.

✓ HYOSCINE.*

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This drug, as is well known, is one of the alkaloids of *Hyoscyamus Niger*, Henbane, nat. ord. *Atropaceae*, occurring in both leaf and seed. It is amorphous or crystalline, and is isomeric with hyoscyamine, its sister alkaloid, with atropine, and with duboisine. The formula, $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$, is also identical with that of scopolamine, a very powerful alkaloid obtained from various kinds of *Scopolia*, nat. ord. *Solanaceae*, a family of which capsicum and bittersweet are familiar members. The whole of these isomers belong to what is known as the tropeine series of alkaloids, are difficult of differentiation chemically, and are well known as powerful, depressant poisons, exhibiting, all of them in varying degree, the chain of symptoms with which as students we were made academically, if not clinically, familiar by the formula of the "four D's"—Dryness, Dilatation, Dizziness and Delirium. They constitute, however, a beautiful example of the fact that drugs, however apparently exactly identical, do clinically display distinct divergence of action, as we shall see of hyoscine if we recollect, without taking time to mention them, the physiological effects of, say, atropine. Scopolamine, for instance, is used as a mydriatic, and is most rapid in its action if instilled into the eye in amounts of one minim of one-tenth of one per cent. solution. A solution stronger than two-tenths is very apt to cause poisoning. The rapidity of its action causes the eye specialist to use it when prompt and rapid effect is desired, as in early

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