

were well known, and also the fact that scabies was contagious. Although the "itch mite" had been discovered as early as the 12th century, according to Hebra, and is mentioned by Ste. Hildegard in a book entitled "Physika," yet at the beginning of the 19th century it was unknown to most physicians, some recognized its existence, but it was regarded as a kind of louse and merely present accidentally in scabies. In the 17th century old women went about extracting these insects with the point of a needle from their burrows in the skin, and Borromo and Cestoni regarded the acarus as the cause of the disease, and said it could be communicated by contact and by shirts, pocket-handkerchiefs, gloves or other articles worn by the persons affected with the disease. The acarus would appear to have been lost sight of for many years, and even in the beginning of last century its existence was doubted by medical men in France, though veterinary surgeons were familiar with it as scab in sheep. But authors such as Bateman, Biett, and Casenave, still ignored it; some admitted the existence of the insect, but said it was a rare and casual circumstance, the approximate cause of the disease being the fluid secreted by the pustules.

Casenave (1829) said: "the proximate cause is wholly unknown," and thinks that pedicular diseases have been mistaken for it by those who believe in the itch mite. M. Gales had in 1812 at the Hôpital St. Louis, demonstrated many times the presence of the insect, and described it. Still Casenave says in 1828, "that until M. Gales, . . . would again visit the Hôpital St. Louis and reiterate his experiments, he should think himself justified in believing that the acarus does not exist."

In 1834 a Corsican named Renucci taught the physicians of Paris how to find the acarus. But old beliefs and superstitions die hard, and even after Eichstädt of Griefswald in 1846 described the burrow and position of the eggs in it, and the larval stage of the animal, and Languentin and Bourguignon described and gave drawings of both the male and female itch mite, and proved by experiment the contagiousness of scabies to be due to the transference of this insect, yet the profession was not convinced. In 1852, nay, even as late as 1864, some authors (Casenave, Duvergie and Gilbert), admitted that scabies could be communicated by the insect, but held that the secretion from the eruption itself was the most frequent cause of contagion. Duvergie said in 1863, that "Scabies may be a spontaneous disease," Hebra in 1846 wrote a paper on scabies, in which he credited the acarus with being the only means of contagion in this disease.

*Ringworm of the Scalp* was classed under the Herpes group of erup-