

THE PROPERTIES OF XANTHIUM SPINOSUM AND ITS USE IN HYDROPHOBIA.*

The following is abstracted from a letter sent by Dr. Grzymala, of Kaivoc-Ozero, Podolia, to Professor Gubler, editor of the *Journal de Thérapeutique*.—"Opposed to specifics, both in medicine and therapeutics, I have faith only in physiological action, although, as regards many substances, this is very little known. I am convinced that the physiological action of a diaphoretic, *xanthium spinosum*, should furnish the explanation of its effects against hydrophobia, for it is of the treatment of this dreadful malady that I wish to speak. This plant infallibly neutralizes the effects of the *rabies virus*, if the single condition be observed that it is administered at once, that is, before the disease declares itself. I have used *xanthium* for several years with the best success, and have not met with a single case of failure, although I have had occasion to administer it at least *ten times as often* to men as to animals bitten by rabid dogs and wolves. In this country rabies is very common, and for more than twenty years that I have employed this remedy an average of ten cases per annum justifies the proportion mentioned.

"*Xanthium* is sudorific, sialogogue, and feebly diuretic, less pronounced in its action than jaborandi. All the physiological effects are not produced on the same subject: some perspire, others are salivated, and others pass more than the normal quantity of urine. The temperature is slightly elevated, and the circulation is usually accelerated. Sometimes it produces headache, or nausea, and even vomiting. In general the appetite is augmented, and the digestive functions are not deranged. The dose for an adult is 60 centigrammes of the dry powdered leaves, repeated three times a day, and continued for three weeks. Children below twelve require half this quantity. It is unnecessary to say that I never cauterise. About twelve years ago one of my dogs, becoming rabid, bit a cow, a pig, a dog, a cat, and a tame crane. The first three were treated with *xanthium* for twenty-one days, and were not further affected; the crane and the cat were left to themselves and died of hydrophobia, the one at the end of three and the other at the end of eleven days after being bitten. During the Crimean war a family of twelve persons were bitten by a rabid wolf. Six of these persons entered the hospital of Olschauka. All were cured, whilst the remaining six, treated by the *actual cautery* and the daily administration of *cantharides*, with *tonquin bean* and *genista tinctoria*, died raging in the course of twelve to sixty days. Two years ago six hounds in my possession were bitten by a rabid dog (this animal succumbed at the end of two days, with all the symptoms of hydrophobia). Three of the bitten hounds were isolated and left without treatment; they

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