

do and for this reason, if for no other, to describe his practice as Allopathy is erroneous.

Homœopaths are urged to discontinue the use of the word, Allopathy, since it no longer accurately describes the total activities of the regular medical profession and can serve only to irritate those whose sole motive is the same as our own: to heal the sick.—A.D.S.

20TH CENTURY BOOMERANGS

When Hahnemann, seeking for more effective therapeutic agents, hit on the plan of subdividing a drug by succussion he discovered a means of liberating power to cure disease and enhance health.

When 20th century man, searching for even more terrible weapons of destruction, devised a method of splitting the atom he unleashed a force terrifying in its potentialities for lethal boomerang effects.

Recent investigations are making these alarming potentialities more and more evident.

Radioactive Fall-out from Air

The fact that "the whole Japanese people were eating radioactive fish, bread, rice and vegetables, drinking radioactive tea, and inhaling radioactive dust for months after the Bikini explosion," was alluded to in this journal in August, 1955.

Such stepping up of normal "back-ground" irradiation carries a serious and as yet not fully known risk of deleterious effects on health, genetic and general.

That this risk is spread over a wide range was demonstrated in an investigation carried out at Memphis, Tennessee, over a period of 70 weeks from October, 1954, to March, 1956. Radioactive iodine is a product of nuclear fission, and it appears in fall-out after the explosion of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. Since radioactive iodine is concentrated in the

thyroid gland its detection in thyroid glands is relatively simple.

During the above mentioned period the radioactive content of thyroid glands from cattle, sheep and human subjects was studied. The cattle, at least, are stated to have been unselected and raised within 200 miles of Memphis—i.e., about 1,200—1,500 miles from the nearest known testing-grounds for nuclear weapons in Nevada.

It was found that the radioactive content of the glands could be correlated in time with the explosion of nuclear weapons, the higher values being recorded shortly after bombs had been exploded.

Such findings indicate widespread contamination by short-lived fall-out. And, if radioactive iodine is being deposited from fall-out and absorbed, it is virtually certain that other important isotopes, such as barium 140 and strontium 89, are also present.

It is difficult not to agree with the conclusion of the writer recording the above investigation, "There can be no doubt that to continue to explode bombs is to take a risk of which we know very little and which may ultimately endanger life unless we act at once."

Radioactive Waters

The afore-mentioned commission, investigating the extent of contamination, found that, "radioactive contamination of the water and of the fish in the Pacific persisted at least for months and extended from around the coast of Japan in the north as far south as New Guinea or Australia, from near Formosa in the west to Hawaii in the east. Radioactive contamination of fish was found to be associated with widespread contamination of zooplankton and of the upper 50-100 metres of the sea."

More recently it has come to light that the disposal of radioactive waste from atomic power-stations is another source of water-pollution.

In the U.S.A. the river Clinch receives waste from the Oak Ridge atomic plant, and it has been found to contain

plankton with a mean radioactivity 10,000 times greater than plankton in parts of the river not affected by waste. The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission recorded striking changes among the fish in White Oak Lake in Tennessee valley despite the fact that the lake is only slightly polluted by atomic effluents. The reproduction-rate, growth, and longevity of fish were reduced, and two species had practically disappeared.

Again it is concluded that "However far contamination of the seas by bombs and atomic waste has in fact gone, we have no clear idea of what damage it may do, directly or indirectly, to human populations. Our ignorance in this matter adds another reason for abandoning at once the firing of nuclear weapons."

Radiation Hazards in Medicine

The use of X-rays, radium, and more recently, radioactive isotopes has been enormously stepped up in recent years. These sources of radiation have been employed both for investigation and for treatment. It would appear now that the time has come to call in question the advisability of both these forms of usage, except when absolutely necessary. In other words the speculative use of X-ray therapy in a variety of disease states of non-malignant nature and a too-ready recourse to various forms of diagnostic X-ray investigation should be most strongly deprecated.

A special committee of the Medical Research Council recently issued a report on medical aspects of radiation. They concluded that, in Britain at any rate, "by far the largest contribution to external radiation is made by diagnostic X-ray examinations." The correlation of dosage to possible long-term effects on the blood and other organs is, of course, extremely difficult. The committee estimate that, "During his whole lifetime an individual should not be allowed to accumulate more than 200 röntgens of whole-body radiation in addition to that received from the natural background, and this allowance should be spread over tens of years; but every endeavour should be made to keep the level of exposure as low as possible."

To this end the committee state, "Adequate justification should be required for the employment of any course of ionizing radiation on however small a scale."

A doctor, commenting on the finding that a patient committed to his care revealed the fact that she had received 127 X-ray examinations in five years, says, "If the recent publicity concerning the genetic hazards of radiation has done nothing else, it will have served a useful purpose by reminding clinicians of the potential dangers of the examinations which they sometimes so light-heartedly request." He might also have added, "and by suggesting to patients that they should not be too insistent in their demands for X-ray examinations."

Many are the hazards of modern life, inseparable it would seem from what is euphemistically termed progress in the scientific and mechanical sense. It is of first importance that these powerful new forces should be fully understood and employed solely for the benefit of the individual. The use of such forces in medicine must also be with the utmost circumspection and so fully safeguarded that only good can result.

—*Extract from the Editorial of 'Homæopathy,' Sept. '56*
