

## THE THYROID GLAND

DR. A. C. GORDON ROSS

The thyroid gland is shaped somewhat like a small bow tie. The lobes measure two inches by one inch by one inch and are connected by a narrow isthmus. Each lateral lobe lies about the level of the sixth ring of the trachea in the throat.

In the mind of the medical student the thyroid gland is associated with goitre, which used to be common in places where the iodine content of the soil was deficient. Some of us can remember women whose goitres were as big as small scarves; those were the famous Derbyshire necks.

The function of this ductless gland is to convert the inorganic iodide in the blood into the hormone thyroxin. The gland is supplied with four large arteries, and the body's blood passes through the gland many times in every 24 hours. Thyroxin helps the metabolism of the body and it is of great importance at puberty, when most of the nodular neck swellings start.

When we were students we were taught that there were four main swellings associated with this gland. They were:

- (1) Nodular, which can be simple or toxic;
- (2) Diffuse, which can be smooth or toxic;
- (3) Inflammatory; and
- (4) New growths, which can be cysts or tumours.

### *All Ductless Glands Connected*

One of the purposes of this series of articles is to emphasise that the ductless glands are all connected and that the quantity of thyroid hormone in the blood is controlled by the anterior pituitary gland which is situated at the base of the brain. A lot of research is going forward at the moment which confirms my belief that the thyroid is dependent for its action on the pituitary, in the brain; the adrenals, and to a lesser extent the pancreas.

This research work shows that the thyroid enzymes convert

inorganic iodide into the organically bound iodine in the thyroglobulin, and that the thyroid hormones are metabolised both in the liver and kidneys.

Orthodox medicine has been very clever in inventing what are now called antithyroidic drugs, whose function is to prevent the synthesis, release or action of the hormone thyroxine. For this they use ions of iodine—the radioactive isotopes of iodine—and the goitrogenic drugs, of which the principal one is thiouracil. This is used for an over-active thyroid, and specially when the patient is being prepared for a surgical operation to reduce the size of the goitre.

If the thyroid gland is not working there occurs myxœdema, a condition in which the patient becomes mentally cabbage-like, with dry skin and falling hair.

What, you may well ask, has the foregoing to do with homœopathy? Not very much, but it has to do with health, and health is something in which we are all interested. The routine homœopath sometimes gives a homœopathic dose of thyroid for myxœdema. Personally, I have found that an allopathic dose of a quarter grain of dried thyroid acts better, especially if given in conjunction with *Calcarea Carb.* or *Calcarea Iod.* Both are great remedies for the constitution which shows impaired nutrition.

Patients requiring the carbonate are fat and flabby, and patients requiring the iodide are usually skinny. The former are chilly persons and the latter hot blooded, with most of their symptoms aggravated by the heat of the bed.

For patients with overactive thyroids there is a choice of remedies which, as usual, depend on the presenting symptoms. The routinist thinks at once of *Spongia*, *Iris Versicol.*, *Iodum*, *Baryta Iod.*, and *Hydrastis*. Occasionally *Natrum Mur.* is indicated. This is curious, for one of the presenting symptoms of *Natrum Mur.* is emaciation about the neck.

#### *A Forgotten Remedy*

Another remedy which is often forgotten is bugle-weed, or *Lycopus Vir.* This remedy has a reputation for lowering the

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"Overpowered by heat; Guaiacum." (Clark). Dr. Nash says, "There are no two remedies oftener indicated after each other and work well when so indicated than these two (Sulphur and Causticum). In many books Sulphur is given as the complementary of Graphites. According to H. J. Allen, Graphites stands out by itself, it cannot be compared with any other remedy, if it is to be compared at all, it can be compared with Tuberculinum; it is anti-psoric, anti-sycotic, anti-syphilitic and typically anti-tubercular. Sepia "corresponds to chronic diseases based on psora, tuberculosis and sycosis." (Dr. K. C. Bhanja).

The use of Tuberculinum is daily coming to the fore front. Thus we find some justification for calling Phthisis the worst form of Psora. Many a time Hahnemann was able to check pus in the lungs by inducing skin eruptions.

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blood pressure. Dr. Kent, in his "Lesser Writings", records curing a case of exophthalmic goitre in 15 months using nothing but *Lycopus* in high potency.

The important thing to remember about all the ductless glands is their interdependence, and if one is deficient this may show in disease, or disharmony, in it or another organ. It is for this reason that I have ever thought it good prescribing to treat a patient with the so-called organ remedies alone.

Hahnemann had the right idea when he emphasised the importance of considering the whole picture of the patient's illness as the only criterion on which to prescribe, for two sick people are more unlike than two who are well.

—Homœopathy, Oct. '58.