devised with a view to the detection of changes in the teeth, contents of the nostrils, deviations of the structure in the maxillary bones, and the seat of foreign bodies in the throat and nose. With improvements in the apparatus and greater force at our disposal, Prof. Röntgen's great discovery promises to do more than was at first anticipated in the diagnosis of affections of the upper respiratory tract.

THYROID, ETC.

BY A. H. ROBINSON, M.D.

The therapeutical treatment of enlargements of the thyroid glands and certain allied conditions has been pursued during the past year with very marked results. A large number of such cases have been placed on record and the various methods adopted set forth. Those methods have included the ingestion of the substance of the thyroid body and the thymus gland of the sheep. Extracts of those organs have also been used in a dry form and in alcohol-glycerine. Finally, the tabloids so much in vogue have been largely employed. The effects produced by these various preparations in nearly all the cases reported have been as striking as ever, but have not, however, proved in any appreciable degree more permanent in character than in others previously recorded.

The inevitable relapse so often chronicled has in very many instances been in evidence. Whatever the precise method of treatment made use of, the parenchymatous forms of the disease are those which have proved most amenable. In myxœdema there has been either a proneness to recurrence when the remedy has been discontinued or it has altogether resisted the action of the remedy employed. Thymus gland, which appears to have been chiefly used in exophthalmic goître, follows the same rule—more or less early improvement, followed by rapid recurrence of symptoms on cessation of the use of the gland, being the rule.

In McKie's ("B. M. J." March 14, 1896) case treated thus, where there was practically no enlargement of the thyroid, but only marked exophthalmos, this latter symptom was markedly relieved. Unfortunately, however, it tended to recur when the thymus tabloids employed were withheld.

In other cases of similar nature thyroid extract was exhibited with permanent improvement, even cure resulting. In one such, however, the symptoms had ensued after the performance of ovariotomy, and were so much exaggerated when the thyroid extract was made use of that its discontinuance became imperative. This was one of a series of interesting cases of Graves' disease reported by this writer ("Am. Med. Surg. Bull.," July 11, 1896).

In a case of goître occurring in the practice of Angerer ("Münch. Med. Woch.," 4, 1896), death occurred soon after the use of thyroid extract was commenced, and was due, in the opinion of that observer, to heart paralysis, which again he attributed entirely to the action of the remedy. A similar result was observed in a case of myxœdema complicated with angina pectoris, reported by Morris ("Lancet," Sept. 24, 1895), minus the fatal termination. The patient was a man, forty-eight years of age. So

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markedly was the angina intensified by the thyroid treatment that it had to be discontinued.

In the treatment of cretinism, some encouraging results have been obtained in that least encouraging of maladies, and there are records of improved growth, enhanced walking power, development of speech, and an all-round improvement in general appearance, growth of hair, and even of mind. These very striking manifestations are only on a par with the results obtained experimentally with the healthy subject, and are significant of the presence of a powerful active principle in the tissues of both the thymus and the thyroid. In both organs the active principle appears to consist largely of iodine, which has been demonstrated by Baumann ("Münch. Med. Woch.," 14, 1896; "Zeitsch. f. Phy. Chem.," Band 21), and dealt with by him in a series of papers.

In the opinion of Hennig ("Münchener Med. Woch.," No. 17, 1896) and others, however, the effects of the extracted matters are not so constant as those produced by the ingestion of the actual gland tissue, and in their experience disagreeable symptoms—cerebral, cardiac, and others—are prone to follow the employment of the artificial products. This thyro-iodin is said to be combined in the gland with albumen and globulin. It has also been found in the thymus of the calf. In some forms of enlargement of the thyroid—notably in the colloid—iodine is said to be diminished in amount. The physiological effects produced by the introduction of thyro-iodin into the organism results in an increase in the phosphoric acid excreted, with a similar increase in the excretion of nitrogen, chlorine, and sodium chloride. Further than that, there is an increase in the decomposition of albumen, and probably of fat also. Other effects produced by it through the nervous system have already been mentioned, and these may be produced directly, or, as has been suggested, by the toxic effects of putrefaction, and such effects are apt to be alarming in character. Some of the physiological effects produced by the ingestion of thyroid gland were well exemplified in a case of Langfeldt ("Raus. Med.," No. 13, 1896), wherein a butcher, accustomed to a diet of roasted pig thyroid, experienced an ever-increasing weakness and loss of weight until the cause was suspected. With the withdrawal of thyroid from his dietary the symptoms, so profound, but for some time inexplicable, entirely disappeared.

The further investigation of this important subject will be watched with much interest, and is full of promise.

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