

MEDICINE

# Gland Therapy Treats Heart Disease Successfully

## Removal of Normal Thyroid Gave Better Results In 64 Cases Than Did Any Other Treatment

**R**EMARKABLE success in the treatment of heart disease by removal of the normal thyroid gland was described at the University of Minnesota by Dr. Elliott Carr Cutler, surgeon-in-chief of Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Boston, and professor of surgery at the Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Cutler discussed this radical and sensational form of surgery wherein a part of the body distant to the diseased part but having an effect upon it is attacked by the surgeon, as an example of the surgery of the future.

He spoke of this change in the treatment of the body as a unit as "A progression from anatomical to physiological surgery."

"It is a step," he said, "representing the greatly increased knowledge of the function of the body and offering the hope that surgery will become less and less a method by which parts of the body have to be removed in order to effect relief."

Reporting observations made on 64 cases in which the thyroid was removed, Dr. Cutler said that "in spite of the almost hopeless condition of many of the cases either because of decompensation or angina pectoris, results were far more favorable than those following any other methods of therapy."

Total thyroidectomy for heart disease was proposed in 1932 and the first operation of this type was reported in 1933.

### Close Relationship

Dr. Cutler pointed out that both experimental studies and bedside clinical observations had shown a close relationship between the thyroid gland and the heart, and it is known that patients who suffer repeated attacks of over-secretion of this gland (thyrotoxicosis) eventually show signs of heart failure.

Further observations showed that the speed of the blood flow roughly paralleled the basal metabolism in the body, rising when the basal metabolic rate was elevated and vice versa. Influence over the basal metabolic rate is only one function of the thyroid gland but, since it

can be measured by a simple test, is commonly used as an indication of thyroid gland function.

In patients with decompensated hearts the speed of blood flow is slow. This inter-relationship, said Dr. Cutler, suggested that when the circulatory rate in such patients could not be raised by rest, drugs or other means of medical therapy, the basal metabolic rate should be slowed by removing the thyroid gland.

In the 64 cases recounted, the only ones reported thus far, Dr. Cutler found that thyroidectomy did drop the basal metabolic rate, which in turn demanded a slow rate of circulation. When this demand dropped to the point where it could be supplied by the crippled heart, equilibrium was established and compensation resulted.

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MEDICINE

## New Disease Like Flu Puzzling Physicians

**C**ITY and private health authorities of San Diego, Calif., are puzzling over a new illness which carries all the outward symptoms of influenza, but which does not cause any change in the patient's temperature.

While several cases of the disease have been reported, the authorities do not regard it as having reached epidemic proportions.

Those afflicted suffer all the ordinary phases of influenza—head and body aches, congested throat and nose, and general sluggishness—but run no fever whatever.

Some private practitioners are attempting in their laboratories to determine whether or not it is due to a hitherto unknown bacterium, while public health authorities are basing their investigations on the assumption it is an allergic infection, similar to hay fever.

"Any bacteriological attack is bound either to raise or lower the body temperature," Dr. Alex Lesem, city-county

health director, commented. "These cases, since there is no temperature change, probably come from some chemical reaction. Recent discoveries in hay fever and similar ailments show us that almost any kind of food or outside material can cause running noses, aches, and congested areas."

The disease is usually thrown off in a few days, leaving the patient none the worse for his experience, the doctors agreed.

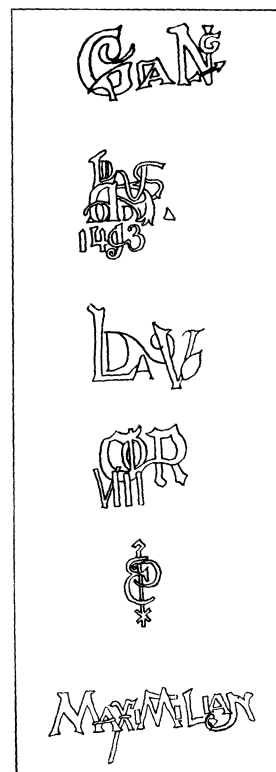
*Science News Letter, March 2, 1935*

ARCHAEOLOGY

## One of Mellon Paintings Center of Controversy

**O**NE of Andrew Mellon's paintings offered the nation is the center of controversy over who painted it: Botticelli or the great master of many arts, Leonardo da Vinci.

Usually credited to Botticelli, "The Adoration of the Kings" bears obscure signatures and inscriptions that mark it from the brush of Leonardo. This is the contention of Prof. J. D. Paulson of



### FAMOUS NAMES

*Names and monograms found by Prof. Paulson on the painting he believes to be a lost da Vinci. The monogram of da Vinci is said to appear twice, once on the shoulder of his own portrait with date 1493, again, lower center as a signature.*