

*Division of the Isthmus to relieve Dyspnœa in certain cases of Bronchocele.* By SIR G. DUNCAN GIBB, Bart., M.D., LL.D., Physician to Westminster Hospital.

In the course of an experience of many years several cases of enlargement of the thyroid gland, affecting one or both of the lateral lobes and implicating the isthmus, have come under my observation. When the isthmus is enlarged, there is usually present a feature of great significance that is the precursor of future mischief—namely, the presence of dyspnœa from pressure upon the trachea, to which very soon it becomes strongly adherent. If not relieved by treatment, the lateral lobes—which in their enlargement sometimes spring from the isthmus itself—may extend on either side of the trachea itself and completely encircle it. The consequence of this is that the tube is compressed laterally, and its form becomes oval, with a very narrow passage to breathe through, which sooner or later ends fatally. An instance of that kind in a young Oxford man was under my observation in 1869, in whom the enlargement was attributed to a cold caught whilst sleeping with the window open. The progress of extension around the trachea was rapid; the compression was so great that fatal dyspnœa occurred in January, 1870, and after death a narrow oval fissure was found to be all that the patient could breathe through during life. Tracheotomy was ineffectually attempted by a skilful hospital surgeon, and, as no relief was afforded, the belief was entertained by a physician of eminence, who saw the case *in extremis*, that an aneurism might be present to account for the symptoms. As I had given the opinion to the father that nothing was wrong beyond the bronchocele and its influence on the trachea, an autopsy proved that only such really existed, and the heart and other organs of the body were healthy. In stating this no blame whatever could be attached to the physician who saw the patient in the hour of his extremity. I could cite other examples, where the disease was gradually progressing towards the same result, and no doubt