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THE THYROID UP-TO-DATE.*

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What impresses the observer of the whole field of medical science, and during the whole period of growth of medical lore, is the wonderfully slow growth in the acquisition of our facts and of our knowledge. In no particular organ is this more manifest than in our knowledge of the thyroid gland. Hippocrates is said to have described ordinary goitre. Shakespeare, in one of his plays, refers distinctly to the same condition. Graves first described the disease which we call exophthalmic goitre, seventy-two years ago. Basedow, working independently in Germany, described it shortly afterwards, and consequently the names of both these men are associated with this disease. Up to ten years ago we knew little more of the functions of the thyroid and the diseases of the same than was known at the time of Graves, or even at the time of Shakespeare. During the last ten years a great deal of work has been done in connection with the thyroid gland, and particularly in connection with the differential diagnosis between the various forms of thyroid disease, and likewise among the Germans in the simplification of the nomenclature of these diseases. The English speaking races are accepting these advances with their usual conservatism, but even they are falling into line in this regard and are gradually accepting the differentiation and the nomenclature of their Teutonic confreres.

I said a moment ago that up to within a few years ago we knew little of the functions of the thyroid gland, and the same

* A lecture to the Alumni Association of the Detroit College of Medicine during Clinic Week, 1907.