

TREATMENT OF OBESITY

The treatment of obesity has hitherto chiefly consisted in the adoption of one of the various dietetic systems, as that of Banting or Ebstein, in connection with the use of drugs which owe their fat-reducing influence mainly to their purgative properties. While some persons obtain benefit from strict adherence to one of these so-called reduction cures, there are many who are unwilling to put up with the attending discomfort, or to whom the treatment becomes so irksome that the patient cannot be made to persevere for a sufficient time to experience its effects. Others, again, are so weakened by a radical change in the diet that it cannot long be maintained. Hence, when some time ago attention was drawn to the fact that many cases of obesity could be improved by thyroid feeding, it was thought that a decided acquisition had been made to the therapeutics of this affection. It was found, however, that owing to their uncertain strength it was difficult to regulate the dose of thyroid preparations, and that partly in consequence of this and partly because of the presence of albuminoid decomposition products unpleasant and even injurious sequelae were not infrequently noted. When, therefore, Baumann discovered the active principle of the thyroid, a preparation of which with sugar of milk has been introduced under the name of Iodothyrene, he enabled the physician to avail himself of all the benefits of the thyroid treatment in obesity without the drawback of other thyroid products. Experiments made with Iodothyrene by Dr. Grawitz in the medical clinic of Prof. Gerhardt, of Berlin, by Dr. Hennig and others, have demonstrated that even in cases where no change was made in the diet there was a rapid and marked reduction in weight. This was unaccompanied by unpleasant or toxic effects of any kind, so that the new remedy may be considered as a safe and reliable anti-fat and an important acquisition to the treatment of obesity.—*American Practitioner and News.*

COLLAPSE OF THE KEELEY CURE

Every now and then there comes along a medical humbug of some sort, the province of which seems to be, as remarked by the editor of the *Popular Science Monthly* a few years ago with reference to the blue-glass mania, "to test the length, and breadth, and depth of the foolishness of the nineteenth century." The Keeley Cure was certainly one of these foolometers, though it has been by no means so innocent as the blue-glass mania, for it has left behind it a multitude of human wrecks to linger out a miserable existence in insane and inebriate asylums. Not a few young men have allowed themselves to drift under the influence of the drink habit, cherishing the delusion that when the danger-point was reached escape from it would be easy through the Keeley Cure or some similar agency. In this way the popular faith in a medicinal antidote for inebriety has done an untold amount of mischief.

It would be impossible to prepare a more thorough refutation of the claims of the originators of these so-called cures than that furnished by the following from an editorial by Dr. T. D. Crothers in the *Quarterly Journal of Inebriety*:—

"A valued correspondent writes us that he has gathered from correspondence and newspaper clippings the following facts about gold-cure institutes:

"During the year 1896, twenty-two so-called Keeley gold-cures suspended and dissolved; twenty-seven gold-cures homes, where specific treatment for alcohol and opium was given, have gone out of business: five new companies have been formed to sell rights to use secret inebriate cures: three ex-superintendents of gold-cure establishments have committed suicide.

"To this we would add that in three years we have made notes of the relapse of nineteen physicians who have been medical directors of gold-cure establishments. Ten of these persons sought treatment in regular asylums where no specifics were used."—*Modern Medicine.*