

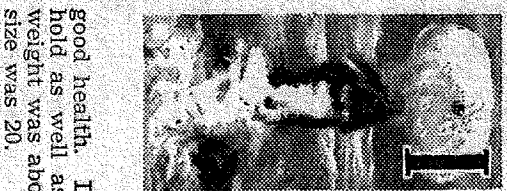


PRODIGINE

Cured of Goitre With One Dose

By Anna D. Dane

AM 53, happy in love and marriage and motherhood, grateful to God and a miracle of medical science for life and good health.



My home is 100 Walnut st., Watertown, Mass. I was married in 1918. My husband for many years has conducted a men's and women's retail fur-nishing business at stores in Newton and Boston. We have been blessed with three children, a son now 27, another son, 20, who is with the U. S. Army in Austria, a daughter who is now 16 years of age. Until 1941 I enjoyed normally good health. I was always active, in my household as well as in my husband's business. My weight was about 155. My dress size was 20.

In 1941 I began to fail. In 15 months of 1941 and 1942 I lost 32 pounds. My dress size dropped from a 20 to an 18, and a 16, and finally to a 14. This was a decline so gradual that while it alarmed me and my family we had no realization of its terrible portent.

Normally energetic but calm I went gradually into a state of extreme nervousness. While walking I never could seem to walk fast enough for the urge within me, yet nobody could walk fast enough to keep up with me. On Sundays, preparing dinner, I rushed around the house like a cyclone in response to an engine racing inside me. My daughter used to say:

"Mother, there's no need of rushing around today. Take it easy. Nobody's in a hurry. It's Sunday!"

But I couldn't slow down. I couldn't relax. I felt an increasingly extreme fatigue, yet I had to be everlastingly on the go. My pulse was fast, my heart hammered. Waiting for sleep to come at night the pounding of my heart was like a clock-tick racing in the room.

In the later months of my illness a slight swelling appeared at the base of my neck and my eyes took on a glazed, distended appearance. A woman's mirror, which tells her many secrets, whispers none more alarming than those. They were the first outward manifestations of toxic goitre, though I did not then know it. I knew only that a strange tension held me fast in an unbreakable grip, that I continued to lose weight and that some fire within me seemed to consume me. I could never seem to get cool enough, even in winter. To achieve sleep, even when the temperature hovered around zero, I needed all windows open in my bedroom, much to the discomfort of my husband who is a sufferer from a chronic bronchial condition aggravated by night air.

THE AMERICAN WEEKLY

THE AMERICAN WEEKLY



Mrs. Anna D. Dane

In an attempt to stop losing weight I began to eat huge meals, twice as much as I ordinarily ate. My breakfasts were tremendous and I drank egg-nogs before going to bed. Consuming the extra food was no effort. The fire burning up my energy demanded more and more fuel. Yet my weight continued to drop.

For some months my husband's sister watched my failing health with an anxiety which became acute once she believed she recognized symptoms of an overactive thyroid gland. She and my husband urged me to consult a doctor without voicing their suspicions. Though the swelling in my throat had not yet begun, the hammering of my pulse was more pronounced and the sense of a tightening within me—the eternal tension—grew and grew.

Finally I went to a physician who made lung X-rays and tested my heart. Both tests were negative. This was only six months after I had begun to fail and my symptoms were not so extreme as to be obvious to him. He prescribed a tonic and for the next nine months I consumed bottles of tonic and hundreds of pounds of extra food. Steadily my weight dropped. Month after month I continued to fail. And in my neck the swelling began.

My weight was 103 and I could wear a size 14 dress but I was no longer interested in dresses—and when a woman is no longer interested in dresses she is really sick! My husband and his sister for a long time had been pleading with me to consult a specialist or enter a hospital for a thorough check-up, and I finally agreed to go to Massachusetts General Hospital.

There, at the thyroid clinic, I first met Dr. Saul Hertz, director of the clinic and a research associate at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I was not aware at the time that he had pioneered in the use of radioactive iodine for treatment of goitre cases. In fact I knew nothing of radioactive iodine. Iodine to me was something you put on a cut if you nipped a finger slicing bread. Under Dr. Hertz' direction I underwent my first test to determine my basal metabolic rate, the indicator of thyroid gland activity. He computed my excessively high rate, made other examinations and told me:

"You very definitely have a goitre."
I said nothing. I knew, or thought I knew, what that meant: major surgery or death. Dr. Hertz said: "I might have told you that with reasonable certainty just observing you if you sat across from me in a street car." He then explained the obvious symptoms.

I am not a natural worrier but I was deeply concerned about the prospect of thyroid surgery. Would it be successful? I had heard of cases where it was not. I knew that one surgeon had cut 30,000 women's throats to remove goitre. Who would care for my family during a long period of hospitalization and convalescence?

It was I, not Dr. Hertz, who first mentioned an operation. He said: "I can't promise but we may be able to do something for you without surgery."

He then went on to explain simply about radioactive iodine. How he had contracted with Massachusetts Institute of Technology for its manufacture in the cyclotron. How he had used it in more than 20 cases as a convenient method of introducing beta ray irradiation into the thyroid itself without affecting other organs or tissues adjacent to the thyroid.

I confess I was a little confused and a little doubtful. It seemed incredible, impossible, that a small dose of medicine might attack and destroy the growth which menaced my life. But Dr. Hertz was quietly confident and he won my trust and a few weeks later I entered Massachusetts General Hospital to "take my medicine."

It had been explained to me that hospitalization was not necessary due to my condition or to the medicine I was to take but only for the purposes of research in order that a constant check on my reactions could be kept.

For two days I went through certain tests and about noon of the third day Dr. Hertz himself brought my radioactive iodine which had just come from the M.I.T. cyclotron. It was in a small capped bottle, colorless. Dr. Hertz poured it into a glass, carefully rinsing vial and cap in order not to lose any of the precious medicine. The rinsing water and another small amount were added to the radioactive iodine and I drank it in a swallow. It had only a slight taste. What's the next step?

That's all there is to it.

EXPERIENCED no ill effects of any kind, no nausea or faintness. I remained in the hospital for about 10 days, up and about, eating well. I didn't lose any more weight but I still felt greatly fatigued. Yet daily tests showed my basal metabolic rate had begun to drop to normal.

Finally Dr. Hertz told me with a smile to go home and take things easy for two weeks and then see him again.

In two weeks I gained 10 pounds—the first time in 15 months I had been able to check my falling weight and put on an ounce. My basal metabolic rate had continued to drop. I felt much better. A great deal of my tension was gone, much of my nervousness. I was able to relax.

It is difficult to describe the peace and elation which came to me during the following months. My pulse ceased its racing, my heart its terrific hammering. Every visit to Dr. Hertz showed steady progress. The swelling left my throat and with it the feeling of constriction. The appearance of my eyes became normal.

My mirror told me daily a happier story. My weight increased so I no longer could wear the small size dresses which had been too large for me. I was better than a new woman; I was the woman I had been before my goitre began to grow.

I took only that single dose of radioactive iodine, yet when Dr. Hertz entered the Navy seven months after my treatment all outward and inward symptoms of goitre had vanished. That was three years ago. I remain in excellent health, at peace in mind and body, serene, thankful.

June 2, 1946