

RACE OF GERMAN DWARFS.

In Germany, in recent years, a whole race of these dwarfs lived together for eight or ten generations, in a sort of Lilliputian village. Barnum found them and brought several of them to this country to amuse the patrons of his circus. The probable cause of a whole race of cretins springing up is that two people with deficient thyroid glands married and had children. The children, in turn, mated with similar dwarfs, and so the group gradually increased by intermarriage.

No method has been found to cure cretinism, once it has stunted its victim in childhood. Thousands of children are saved untold suffering today by supplying of additional thyroid extract when the deficiency in their glands is discovered in time. But to take a mature dwarf, or cretin, and make him start growing all over again is another matter. That is what Dr. Breakstone of Chicago claims he can do. And it is because the thyroid glands of "Little Lillian," Dr. Breakstone's patient, are probably atrophied that Dr. Mayo would call it a freak performance if they can be revived.

A new gland will, in fact, have to be grown if nature herself is to be called upon to increase Lillian's height by two feet. Thyroid tablets are not powerful enough to cause growth once a human being has reached maturity. Pieces of thyroid gland, taken from animals, have sometimes been transplanted under the skin of a human being, with good results, but this has never gone so far as to cure a mind or body already dwarfed.

It is also interesting to note the extent of the problem of making "Little Lillian" grow. Not only is the size of the bones or skeleton of a cretin limited by his lack of thyroid secretion, but every other part of his body and brain is seriously affected. The number of red cells or corpuscles in the blood is diminished and their chemical make-up changed. The skin is thickened, and usually is yellow, wrinkled, and looks too large for the body. The head is large, producing certain abnormal effects on the brain, and the nose is broad and flat. The lips are apt to be thick and swollen, and the tongue is very large. The legs are almost invariably short and more or less bowed. The mind is always considerably below normal, and cretins are often deaf.

All these distortions of body and mind must be cured, as well as the physical size increased, by the proposed thyroid treatment. To the outsider, it is almost incredible that all these very disagreeable changes can result from the drying up of a single pair of tiny glands in the neck. But that much we know to be true. It is not, therefore, much more difficult to believe that a medical treatment can be devised to reverse the drying-up process of the thyroids.