The Elixir of Life

By Frederic J. Haskin.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 24.—Dr. Benjamin Breakstone of Chicago has recently announced the discovery of a modern elixir of life. Dr. Breakstone does not describe his contribution to medical science in such a poetical way; he calls it, in fact, a thyroid gland treatment. But he has undertaken the task of adding two more feet to the stature of "Little Lillian," a dwarf 21 years old and only thirty-six inches tall. And if the doctor can do that, his treatment will constitute a more potent elixir than that sought by the alchemists for many hundreds of years.

Dr. Charles Mayo, famous surgeon of Rochester, Minn., told the interstate assembly of physicians that his opinion of such glandular treatments as that proposed by the Chicago man was "mostly humorous." He further said that if the newspapers would give as much space to constructive medical articles as they do to "freak" performances, their readers would find much more profit in reading them.

The smaller and more obscure a gland is, the most important it seems to be to the body. Without thyroid glands we should all be two or three feet tall, instead of five or six. Yet the glands themselves are tiny, oval-shaped organs, concealed in the tissues of the neck. They belong to the class of glands called "ductless." This simply means that no tube or duct has been developed by the body to carry the secretion manufactured by the glands into the blood stream. There they remain, in the neck, like little, sewed-up sacks, from which a tiny bit of liquid is constantly oozing into the body. It is this liquid, or secretion, manufactured somewhere within the glands, that controls the nourishment of the body.

There are but two thyroid glands, proper, but there are a large number of reserve or secondary thyroids, called parathyroids. These may grow along the tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach as far down as the heart. The secondary thyroid glands are particularly important for those animals which do not eat meat, but are not of much use to meat-eating or carnivorous animals.

DISCOVERED LONG AGO.