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THE INTERNAL SECRETIONS AND HUMAN WELL-BEING[1]

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PERHAPS there is no field of biological investigation to-day that is attracting more attention on the part of both biologists and the public than that concerned with the glands of internal secretion—secretions which do not pass out from their place of origin through ducts as do ordinary glandular products, but which are absorbed directly into the blood or lymph and circulated through the body. The interest of the public has been aroused in this new knowledge through its rather wild exploitation in the press under such captions as "The Chemistry of the Soul," "The Glands of Destiny," "Rejuvenation through Monkey Glands" and other equally sensational titles, together with the occasional truths that filter through from time to time regarding the really remarkable part played by the internal secretions—or hormones as they are technically called—in our physical and mental well-being.

The ductless or endocrine glands which produce these various internal secretions occur in all backboned animals from fishes to man. The secretions themselves are second in importance only to the nervous system in keeping the parts of the body in harmonious operation. They are also necessary for normal development and growth. They can stimulate or inhibit the activity of some organ or tissue in a part

[1] Address given at the forty-fifth annual meeting of the Iowa Academy of Science, May 1, 1931; in substance, a section from the author's forthcoming textbook, "Animal Biology," published by Harper and Brothers.