

hurry he neglected to retard the spark, and taking a tight hold of the handle he gave it a sudden pull, when, instead of starting, the engine fired back and he received a violent shock on the hypothenar eminence. As an interested crowd was now collecting the injury was not taken much notice of and the driver, retarding the spark, quickly restarted the engine and proceeded on his way.

When I first saw him, which, as already stated, was ten days after the accident, there was a prominent swelling over the proximal half of the fifth metacarpal bone of the right hand, and on manipulating the bone I expressed the opinion that it was fractured. In order to decide the diagnosis, I next day sent the patient to have a skiagram taken and the fifth metacarpal bone was seen to be fractured at the point of junction of its base and shaft. The picture was not so clear as it would have been had the hand been radiographed immediately after the accident as there was a large amount of temporary and partially impervious callus showing. The patient made an uneventful recovery.

Several cases of fracture of the lower end of the radius have been recorded as the result of firing back of motor-car engines when attempts have been made to start them whilst the spark was advanced but I have seen no case recorded in which a fracture of any other bone occurred during this manipulation. The fact that in this case it was the fifth metacarpal bone which gave way is sufficiently accounted for when the conditions under which the accident occurred and the various factors at work are considered. First, in the hurry, a tight and strong grip was taken of the starting lever, the driver's hand being passed so far round the handle that its olivary end rested on the hypothenar eminence; and secondly, the spark was so far advanced that any back-fire occurring was sure to be a sharp one and such as would allow no time for the release of the handle. The quick recoil was therefore transmitted most forcibly through the most prominent part of the handle—namely, its olivary end—which was resting directly over the portion of bone fractured. Had a less tight grip of the handle been taken the principal effort required to start the engine would have been exerted by the thumb and index finger and therefore when the back-fire occurred one of two things might have happened—viz., either the handle would have flown from the grasp altogether or the force would have been transmitted through the first and second metacarpal bones to the lower end of the radius, resulting in a fracture of that bone.

Sunderland.

NOTE ON A CASE OF TETANUS AFTER THE INDUCTION OF PREMATURE LABOUR.

BY W. HERBERT GREGORY, M.D., C.M. EDIN.

THE patient in the present case was a multipara, 42 years of age; she had had nine pregnancies and one miscarriage and she missed a period on Sept. 29th, 1905. Hæmorrhage, sometimes slight, sometimes amounting to flooding, came on in the middle of November and continued for ten weeks. I made examinations on several of these occasions but could never find anything abnormal. Complete rest in bed was ordered and small doses of opium were given. On Jan. 26th, 1906, a serious hæmorrhage occurred; the os uteri was found to be undergoing dilatation and a miscarriage was evidently threatening. With the assistance of Dr. George Savage, who kindly gave chloroform for me, I dilated the os digitally and removed a four months fœtus. There were no trouble with the placenta and no post-partum hæmorrhage. All went well for six days, the temperature being normal and the pulse-rate never above 80. The discharge also had practically stopped at the end of that time. On the evening of Feb. 1st the patient complained of stiffness of the muscles of the neck. I saw her on the next morning and found her head retracted and the jaws tightly closed. There was typical risus sardonicus and she spoke with great difficulty. I had her at once removed to the Cottage Hospital here so as to have her under close observation. Tonic spasms involving the muscles of the trunk and limbs came on in the afternoon and in the paroxysms a condition of pleurosthotonos was present. Feeding had to be carried on by the bowel as any effort to feed by the nose or round the teeth by a tube brought on a paroxysm. There was much pain during the spasms, especially in the region of

the neck, also great lividity of the face and neck, profuse perspiration, and rapid breathing. The patient was quite conscious during the spasms, which increased in number and intensity on Feb. 3rd, there being from 25 to 30 on that day. Her temperature continued normal throughout, but her pulse was feeble and irregular, especially after a paroxysm. Death occurred at 10.20 A.M. on the 4th from asphyxia due to spasm of the respiratory muscles. Antitoxic serum, obtained from Messrs. Parke, Davis and Co., was injected in doses of 10 cubic centimetres every four hours and chloral and bromide were given by the rectum, but nothing seemed to have any effect except chloroform, which was administered during the spasms. The germ must have entered the patient's system through the placental site, as there was no tearing of the os uteri during dilatation, the uterus was well douched after being emptied, and the strictest asepsis was observed throughout the operation. The patient's house was situated in the country but there had been no case of tetanus either in human beings or lower animals anywhere in the neighbourhood for years. Puerperal tetanus in this country must be rare and, as I see from the text-books, is attended with a very high mortality.

Beverley.

PILOCARPINE AND THE MENTAL FACTOR.

BY WILLIAM ROPER, M.A. OXON., L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. EDIN.

PROFUSE perspiration is frequently a means of saving life and the only drug always to be relied on for this purpose is pilocarpine. It seems to me, therefore, of great importance that the danger attending the exhibition of this drug should be clearly present to our minds. For there is certainly a danger in any impediment to vigorous expectoration, especially when sialagogue action is well marked, although this impediment may not be strictly physical in its cause. A frequent use of the drug in full and sometimes large doses has led me to the conclusion that the dangerous symptoms sometimes seen are mental in origin. This view is illustrated in the following case, where the only bad effects of which I have ever had experience (and I have given two-thirds of a grain hypodermically more than once to people in worse physical condition) occurred. The patient took one-third of a grain of pilocarpine nitrate by the mouth in bed one night with excellent effects and the next morning he took one-twelfth of a grain, or one-quarter the previous dose, and went about his duties, which were military, under conditions of no particular exertion. Vigorous expectoration of saliva was, however, inhibited with the result that he was soon in a condition of collapse which fortunately passed off without any permanent bad effect. I was most careful to take particular note in writing of the doses, so that it might be observed that the dose attended with bad effects was one-quarter of what was taken with good effect the night before.

Bridport.

Medical Societies.

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

Results of Operation for the Radical Cure of Hernia.—Angiosarcoma of the Breast.

A MEETING of this society was held on March 26th, Sir LAUDER BRUNTON, the President, being in the chair.

Mr. J. HUTCHINSON, jun., read a paper on the Results of Operation for the Radical Cure of Hernia, which we hope shortly to publish in full.—In the discussion which followed Mr. F. S. EVE said that in the early part of the year 1899 he wrote to all the patients upon whom he had operated for the radical cure of inguinal hernia between the years 1888 and 1898 inclusive. The total number of cases operated on was 141. This total was made up as follows: Bassini's operation, 71 cases; Macewen's operation, 15; ligature of the neck of the sac in adults, 26; and operations on children under the age of ten years, 29. Of the 112 adults operated on not one died; of the patients operated on by Bassini's method, 40 were seen and were available for statistical inquiry. Of these, three had recurred, a percentage