may be of interest to those who make a study of epilepsy and its treatment.

A male patient transferred to this hospital had been the victim of attacks of *grand mal* for a considerable period. On arrival he was in a mental state which could be classified as dementia. He was very confused, impulsive, violent, filthy in habits and obscene in his language.

His seizures were most frequent at night, and were all of the *grand mal* type. During the first week (February, 1926) he had 10 seizures, of which 8 were at night. Luminal sodium, gr. 1½ *b.d.*, was administered, and during March he had only 7 seizures in all, of which 4 were on one day. Thereupon the dose was increased to gr. 3 *b.d.*, and during April the total number was 8, and these during the day.

A diminution of the dose to gr. 1½ resulted in an increase to 26 fits in May. A second increase in the dosage resulted in a steady decrease of the fits in June and their total absence in August and September. A return to gr. 3 with pot. brom. gr. 30 at noon resulted in an immediate cessation of the seizures. The dose was later gradually reduced after stopping the bromide. Since July, 1927, gr. 1 *b.d.* has been sufficient to check completely the epilepsy.

Since October, 1926, the patient has been free from seizures. Physically and mentally he has completely changed. He has increased in weight to the extent of 12 lb. Mentally he is now alert, bright, sociable, normal in his behaviour, and has had "parole" outside the grounds for some time. I would suggest, as a result of experimenting with this severe case, that fairly large doses of luminal should be used at first (sodium preparation), morning and night, and combined with pot. brom. gr. 30 at noon. Then a gradual tapering off, beginning with the bromide.

Sodium sulphate one drachm was given every other morning early for a considerable period, and had a satisfactory effect. At the patient's request it has been continued and is now given twice weekly.

G. W. MACKAY, M.B., D.P.M.

GARDENAL IN EPILEPSY: A COMPLICATION.

A patient, æt. 67, male, suffering from epilepsy and having both types of fits, was treated with gardenal gr. 1½ daily for a period of three months with satisfactory results in the reduction of the number of fits. During the three months preceding the administration of this drug the patient had had 8 major and 218 minor fits, as compared with 3 major and 178 minor for the following three

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months when under the influence of gardenal. Previous to the use of this drug the number of fits had been progressively increasing. At the end of the second period of three months the patient developed a marked degree of œdema in both legs and some ascites. An investigation of this condition excluded the cardiac, renal and portal systems, nor was any local cause present. Blood tests for non-protein nitrogen, uric acid and chlorides gave normal percentages, and established the fact that the renal efficiency was good.

The gardenal was discontinued, the patient was kept in bed, and the dropsy disappeared in four days.

I am of opinion that the œdema was a toxic one, due to the action of the drug on the endothelial lining of the capillaries, increasing their permeability.

DANIEL J. O'CONNELL, M.B.

A Method of Nursing the Helpless and the Paralysed. By H. T. KIRKLAND, M.A., M.B., Ch.B.Glasg., Senior Assistant Medical Officer at the County Mental Hospital, Whittingham, Preston.

IT has long been recognized that one of the problems of hospital practice and of good nursing has been the treatment of those patients who, either through organic disease of the central nervous system or an advancing state of senile dementia, or the onset of one of the psychoses, have lost permanently or temporarily the control of their sphincters and are continually soiling themselves in bed. Anything which could be done for the amelioration of their unhappy lot—for some are extremely sensitive and feel their position acutely—would be welcomed by all concerned.

Some time ago, a colleague on a visit to a continental clinic brought back the particulars of a method of nursing which has been tried in this hospital and which, in my opinion, might be used with benefit in hospitals nursing cases of this kind.

The beds used are rectangular and box-like in shape, 6½ ft. long, 30 in. wide and 18 in. deep, and are constructed of 1-in. dressed boards. The box stands on legs 12 in. in height, and the whole is painted white. Castors may be fitted if desired, as in ordinary bedsteads. Dry sawdust* which will pass through a ¼-in. sieve and which is not too fine—to prevent caking—is used for filling up the box to about 6 in. from the top. Medicated sawdust, such as is obtained from pitch pine, may be substituted with advantage for ordinary sawdust.

The patient, wearing a short night-dress or shirt, lies directly on

* An improvement, certainly, on straw, which has been used in Continental asylums for many years.—[EDS.]

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