the dorsum of the tongue until it comes in contact with the pharyngeal wall. Then, by a simple leverage action of the wrist, the whole tongue with the epiglottis and hyoid bone may be made to move upwards and away from the pharyngeal wall as far as the thyro-hyoid membrane will allow such a movement; and in a moment all obstruction to the entrance of air in and out of the lungs is thus removed. As long as the spoon handle thus supports the tongue, hyoid bone, and epiglottis, none of these structures can possibly interfere with the entrance of air into the lungs during the movements of artificial respiration (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2.—A photograph of the same body, showing the appearance of the neck below the chin in the middle line (a) when the spoon handle is held in proper position during artificial respiration. In this case examination showed that the whole tongue was well removed from the pharyngeal wall, and that the epiglottis was raised, and the aryteno-epiglottic folds were quite tense.

In all cases of deep insensibility, as in *anæsthesia*, and in the apparently drowned, this method of removing all possible obstructions to the entrance of air into the lungs during artificial respiration is at once both safe and reliable, and in combination with Howard's method of pumping air in and out of the chest gives the most satisfactory results. The sword swallower has no difficulty in passing the sword down his gullet when his head is thrown well back; and there is even less difficulty in lifting up the tongue, epiglottis, and hyoid bone in the way I have described.

MENTAL PECULIARITIES IN HÆMOPHILIA.

By CLINTON T. DENT, F.R.C.S.,
Surgeon to St. George's Hospital, London.

IN the interesting case of *hæmophilia* described in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of April 2nd (p. 883), passing allusion is made to a point which, though, according to my experience, very common in these patients, has hitherto been little noticed. In the hope of eliciting information on the point, corroborative or other, I venture to trespass on your columns.

Patients subject to *hæmophilia*—bleeders in short, for that term is surely better than "*hæmophilics*"—constantly exhibit mental peculiarities of definite form. The most important and the most common mental peculiarity is an inability (it is more than an unwillingness) to tell the truth about their condition even when they have had repeated and alarming experience of their defect. Frequently they will persist in obstinate denial of their liability to bleed, even when the hæmorrhage is going on, and resisting all efforts to check it. I well recall a strongly-marked instance of this unfortunate and misleading propensity that occurred some years ago in hospital practice. A youth, about 16 years of age, was admitted for persistent hæmorrhage following the extraction of a carious lower molar tooth. Every kind of remedy was tried, but the bleeding, though often checked for the time, broke out again and again. Eventually the inferior dental canal was plugged, but after a while the hæmorrhage recommenced and the boy died. From first to last he denied stoutly that he had ever suffered from bleeding, though the condition of *hæmophilia* was obvious enough to all. Though sane in all other respects, and aware of his serious condition, he maintained this attitude throughout. We were anxious

to communicate with his friends, but he flatly refused to give the address of his relations. Ultimately and by chance the address of his mother was discovered, and she was sent for. There was no need to break the news gently to the woman, for the moment she arrived she said, "I know what has happened; my son has had his tooth taken out, and he is bleeding to death. The same thing almost happened two years ago, and on many occasions his condition has been most serious from slight scratches or wounds." The youth furiously resented his mother's appearance at his bedside, and died actually cursing her, and all who had to do with him, while asserting almost with his last breath the *idée fixe* that he did not bleed more than others.

This distressing case, though exceptional in its circumstances, is no isolated experience, and I doubt not many others have met with patients subject to similar delusions. *Hæmarthrosis* may easily simulate tuberculous disease in appearance, and most surgeons would probably admit—if only to themselves—that once in a way they have at first been deceived by such cases.

In these days of early and free operative measures the precaution of ascertaining whether there is any history of *hæmophilia* should, in the case of joint disorders, be a matter of routine. It is not, as I have shown and always taught, sufficient to rely on the patient's word alone, however categorical and clear his statements may seem to be.

The suggestion that bleeders should be tattooed does not seem to be a happy one. Apart from the obvious practical difficulty of gaining consent, the tattoo punctures would be likely to give rise to trouble. If bleeders and epileptic patients could be induced to wear round their necks a small label setting forth their infirmity, they would probably derive advantage. But epileptic patients are far more likely to adopt any such device than bleeders.

THE ALKALINITY OF THE BLOOD IN GOUT.

By ARTHUR P. LUFF, M.D., B.Sc., F.R.C.P.,
Physician in Charge of Out-patients, St. Mary's Hospital.

It is well known that an attack of gout may be accelerated by the ingestion of certain foods or beverages harmful either as regards their quality or quantity. One view, which has been commonly held for some time, is that such substances when they accelerate an attack of gout reduce the alkalinity of the blood, and so hasten the precipitation of sodium biurate from that medium, or, as is so frequently stated, they cause "an acidity of the system." It is assumed by those who hold this view that a nitrogenous animal diet diminishes the alkalinity of the blood and so causes deposition of sodium biurate, and that a similar result is caused by the acids contained in wines and beers; whilst, on the other hand, it is assumed that a subsequent rise in alkalinity causes solution of the previously-formed deposits. In the Goulstonian Lectures of last year I showed by a series of experiments that a diminution of the alkalinity of blood serum neither diminished the solubility of sodium biurate in that serum, nor did it produce any effect on the rate of decomposition of sodium quadriurate by such serum, and that, therefore, it was extremely improbable that a diminution of the alkalinity of the blood could in any way affect the gouty process.

Although so many writers have inclined to the view that a diminished alkalinity of the blood is associated with gout, it is remarkable that such a view has no basis of positive experimental evidence whatever. As a matter of fact the proof is in the opposite direction. The experiments of Klemperer¹ show (1) that the alkalinity of the blood of gout is but very little, if at all, diminished; (2) that corresponding variations in the alkalinity may frequently be met with in healthy individuals; and (3) that a diminution of the alkalinity of the blood is a common pathological condition in diseases that are in no way associated with uratic precipitation, such as acute rheumatism, leukæmia, diabetes, carcinoma, and pyrexia. I therefore thought it advisable to make systematic determinations of the alkalinity of the blood throughout the duration of an undoubted attack of gout, and to compare such alkalinity with the average alkalinity of specimens of blood drawn from a number of healthy individuals.

The process that I employed for these determinations of the