

# AUTOMOBILE FRACTURE OF RADIUS.

BY

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Possibly, at the outset, one ought to explain the exact meaning of the appellation which is set down as the title of this communication. It is a name which belongs to the development of the automobile industry, and comes to us from France. A synonymous term, sometimes used is that of "Chauffeur's fracture."

Being on the look-out for the lesion from reading, but never having heard before of a case in Montreal, I fancied the condition might be equally unfamiliar to the members of the society, and, therefore, of sufficient interest to bring before them.

The patient was seen July 18, 1905, immediately after the accident, the mechanism of which was as described below. He thought he had sprained his wrist. Having reason to suspect a fracture on account of the fact that tenderness was localized a little above the joint-line, I had a skiagraph taken, which showed the fracture as seen in the accompanying tracing. There was not the least deformity, such as one gets in a Colles fracture. The result has been excellent under fixation, early massage and movements.

This fracture has been studied of late mainly by French surgeons, France being the home of the auto. Lucas-Championnière read a *mémoire* on the matter in the spring of 1904, and describes the mechanism of the fracture as follows:

"To start an automobile, the crank is turned several times until an explosion is produced. Now, it not infrequently occurs that, as the handle is being turned, a premature explosion takes place, the consequence of which is a sudden reversion of the rotation of the handle,—a sort of snap-back. Usually, the chauffeur lets go in time; but, if not, then the hand is carried with the handle violently backwards from right to left. The resulting damage may be anything from a sprain or a simple fissured fracture up to a total separation of the epiphysis, or even a tearing out of the joint leaving the skin intact. The larger the machine the more violent is the recoil."

The French put forward two theories to explain the mode of action. M. Dragon, who in 1902 showed six cases of this fracture, attributed it to the shock of the handle upon the heel of the hand, like a fall upon the outstretched palm—exactly as in Colles fracture. Lucas-Championnière thinks otherwise; there is no such shock, he maintains,

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\* Read before the Montreal Medical Society, —, 1905.