No examination was allowed, though much pressed by the late Sir James Clark, who attended in consultation with me.

These cases may serve as examples, partly of "obstinate constipation", partly of "obstruction." You will have seen from them that even "feculent vomiting" is not always a fatal symptom; it is, however, one of extremely bad augury. When once it shows itself, nothing can be attempted in the way of giving medicines by the mouth, for the nausea is constant, and the stomach is excited to vomiting as often as it is refilled from the bowels. In many cases, the obstruction is irremediable from the first, and when this is the case, all purgative treatment must greatly aggravate the distress.

Some years ago, the late Mr. Lloyd performed the operation of section of the abdomen, with the hope of discovering some removable cause of obstruction, and thus giving relief to one, on whom all other measures had been vainly tried for about three weeks. Although the operation was performed with great care and skill, and seemed to be quite proper as a last resource, I should hardly feel justified in recommending it in another case. It was shown in this case that the disease was of a necessarily fatal character.

I have little to say on the subject of treatment. The remarks which I have made consist almost of objections to the use of *active* purgatives. The first thing to be done is to satisfy ourselves that there is no hernial protrusion—that there is nothing which in the first instance demands surgical relief. Having ascertained this, we should then administer injections, and repeat them as long as they bring away any fecal matter. It has been supposed that gentle pressure or a "kneading", as it were, of the bowels, has been productive of good effects. It is difficult to understand on physical principles how this can be the case; nevertheless we are told that on one occasion a somewhat heavy hand brought relief which had been denied to the exertions of a gentler manipulator.

Many absurd remedies have been recommended, in ignorance, one might suppose, of our anatomical formation. Among these, metallic mercury is one, the weight of which, it was thought, would carry everything before it. Neither should I have so much confidence in galvanic shocks passed through the abdomen, as I once heard expressed by a gentleman who was accompanying the late Dr. Hue, in one of his visits at the Hospital. They were considering a case of *obstinate constipation*, when Dr. Hue's friend suggested galvanism. Dr. Hue smiled, as if he doubted whether his friend was serious or not, and then asked if he had ever found that to be efficacious. "Efficacious!" said the other, "I tried it once, and could hardly get out of the way in time." "Then", said Dr. Hue, "let it be done."

OBSTETRIC MEMORANDA.

SPONTANEOUS INVERSION OF UTERUS.

In the JOURNAL of December 24th, 1870, is an interesting account of a case of "spontaneous inversion of the uterus" reported by Mr. Webster Adams of Norwich. The following is the only case of the kind which has come under my notice during a midwifery experience of many years. Mrs. P., a young married woman, had been attended by a neighbouring practitioner in her first confinement on October 30th, 1868. The labour was natural, except that it was followed by rather profuse atonic hæmorrhage. The following day—twenty-four hours after delivery—her medical attendant was sent for hurriedly; and, when he arrived, found that, after a sudden accession of powerful expulsive pains, complete inversion and extrusion of the uterus had taken place. There was no hæmorrhage, but the patient was anæmic from the previous loss, and seemed very prostrate, with rapid, feeble pulse. He immediately returned the uterus within the vagina; but, experiencing some difficulty in effecting its further reduction, procured my assistance. We put the patient under chloroform, and, without much difficulty, I succeeded in restoring the uterus to its natural position, after it had been inverted for five hours. The procedure which I adopted consisted in grasping the inverted uterus with the right hand, introduced within the vagina, exerting at the same time powerful upward pressure until the vagina was fully on the stretch, when I became sensible of the gradual recession of the tumour. Following this up carefully with my fingers, I soon found my hand occupying the cavity of the uterus, showing that its natural condition was restored. The reduction took place without any perceptible jerk. I retained my hand in the uterus for a time, and grasped it externally with my left hand until firm contraction was excited, when I cautiously withdrew the hand from the uterus, and no recurrence of the displacement took place. The patient made a good recovery without the supervention of any inflammatory symptoms. Sandon, Stone, Jan. 1871.

J. H. TYLCOTE, M.D.

AN ADDRESS

ON

THE IMPROVEMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION.

Delivered before the Medical Teachers' Association, January 20th, 1871.

By CAMPBELL DE MORGAN, F.R.S.,

Surgeon and Lecturer on Surgery at the Middlesex Hospital, etc.

GENTLEMEN,—On taking the chair for the first time, the thought which is uppermost in my mind, as it assuredly is in yours, is the sad event which has deprived us of one of the most useful and zealous of our members—of a president whose high character and attainments rendered him in every way a fitting successor to Simon and to Jenner. In acknowledging the honour you have done me in electing me your president, I must at the same time confess that I accepted reluctantly a position hitherto filled by men so eminently qualified to establish and to advance the character and influence of the Association. I did not feel justified, however, in refusing, under the circumstances, an invitation so flatteringly made. But, while confessing to a want of those qualities which have distinguished your former presidents, I yield to no one in the earnest desire to promote our common object. Nor do I think that any one among us is more deeply impressed with the conviction of the usefulness of such an institution as this, if it confine itself strictly to its true and legitimate objects—the improvement of education, the efficiency of the schools, and the cultivation of a cordial co-operation and good feeling between them.

The two questions which it was intended should be brought forward this evening come within the scope of this definition. The one—that of the propriety of doing away, under certain conditions, with certificates of attendance on lectures—leads directly to the important subject, which has frequently cropped up in the course of our discussions, of the enforcement on the student of a fixed, special mode of acquiring knowledge. This question, as you may remember, was referred back to the Council, and, on reconsideration, it was found that fresh information would be necessary before it could be again presented to a general meeting; and this information a committee is engaged in collecting. The other question—that relating to the amalgamation of schools—has a bearing yet more weighty on education, and especially, perhaps, on the most important branch of it—*practical teaching*. But this, too, is postponed; and we can only now sympathise deeply with the gentleman who was to introduce it on the occasion of the severe domestic calamity which has befallen him, and which obliges him for the time to withdraw his motion.

Thus we might have been left to-night without occupation. But there was a subject which would of necessity have taken precedence of either of those which are for the time withdrawn. One of the objects of our meeting is to hear and to discuss one another's views as to the best and most practicable mode of carrying out the regulations imposed on us by the examining boards. The effect of this is to harmonise without trammelling the actions of the schools.

The College of Surgeons has issued regulations, some of them novel in character, which must come into immediate or early operation, and which compel an enlarged area of action in the schools. The regulations are somewhat vague, perhaps intentionally so, and they must therefore be interpreted by the teachers. I think we may congratulate ourselves on the action of the College of Surgeons, for to a great extent most of the schools were in advance of the then regulations, and had voluntarily adopted modes of teaching which the new regulations only now render compulsory. We may congratulate ourselves, because these regulations enforce that for which we have been striving—a higher recognition of practical education. The new rules will not find us unprepared, for the most part, to adopt them. But there are questions requiring consideration, and which can be best considered at a combined meeting of the schools. Such are—What is meant by practical physiology? to what extent should it embrace experimentation on animals? In what manner may students take part in physiological experiment? Or does practical physiology really mean only the practical study of subjects auxiliary to physiology, as histology, chemistry, and physics? The latter seems to be now the interpretation of the Council of the College, but doubtless many schools are prepared to take the wider view.

In connexion with this subject, I must claim your indulgence if I express opinions which I know are not shared by many of you, but which I have long entertained, and which time only strengthens. In the days which at a former meeting were alluded to as having produced lecturers on anatomy and physiology, whose class-rooms were thronged by willing students, those subjects were united in one course not longer than the anatomy course in the present day. Then came in the teaching of French anatomy, as it was called—an attention to minute details, a lengthened description of each unimportant part with a minuteness which would be tedious in connexion with even the most important. Physiology—a science whose boundaries were rapidly enlarging—was necessarily dissociated from Descriptive Anatomy, which was thus deprived of what gave it its principal charm. The dissociation was unavoidable; but has the result been unmixed good? Now I speak from my own experience (having lectured on both subjects), that one is apt to forget the object of our teaching, and the receptive powers of mind of the majority of our hearers. We address ourselves to the intelligent few, and as if these subjects were the end of their pursuit, and not mere steps towards it. Remembering that it is the general mass of future practitioners that we have to prepare, is it desirable to track physiology through all the widely extending channels which are now being explored? Should we not rather labour to fix in the minds of students the established facts of the science, and to rest content if we can fix them deeply and permanently?

Of course we may be told that all scientific practice must be derived from, and have its foundations in, physiology. But this, while received as an abstract proposition, *must* be acted on with considerable reserve. All *good* practice will be consistent with physiological truth. But are we yet possessed of physiological truth? For the most part, we know as yet but little of the force, the mechanism, or the mode of action at work in our organism. The truth of to-day is the error of tomorrow. Doubtless, when a law is once established, we may base our practice upon it securely and unalterably. But how many *laws* are established? I think that, whatever our feeling may be, we do admit to ourselves that a rational empiricism is better than a rigid adherence to a practice founded on a half truth. If physiology were taught in our schools for the purpose of training physiologists simply, and not practitioners of medicine, then the case would be different. Do we not, in teaching *up* to the few exceptionally intelligent minds—which would work out the subject for themselves—shoot beyond and above the ordinary majority?

I fear I shall be looked on as heretical, and quite below the spirit of the age, if I put in a claim in abatement of over-minute anatomical teaching. I would say again, that if anatomy—of the bones, for example—is to be taught with the object of training comparative anatomists, minuteness cannot be carried too far. But the end should direct the means. Let the student dissect with the greatest possible care and minuteness; it trains his hand and eye; but I doubt whether in the lecture-room anatomy could not be better taught (for the preparation of medical men) if important practical points were dwelt on—over and over again, if you please—to the neglect of useless minutiae, which serve as mere exercises of memory to the student, and which are forgotten in a short time, even by the teacher, and are never brought to bear on actual practice.

You will not, I am sure, think me so wanting in common sense as to ignore the all-importance of anatomy and physiology. My plea is for the better teaching and the more permanent retention of the true and necessary to the repression of the, as yet, hypothetical and useless. Let us demand of those who seek the higher academical honours of the profession such an amount of scientific knowledge as will justify their receiving a stamp of excellence. They can always find, by independent study, the means of satisfying our demands. But for those whose aim is more limited, let us be satisfied if we can instil into them a thorough knowledge of what is useful and practical. Under any circumstances, I am glad to think that the practical element in physiology is to be more cultivated.

In the case of practical surgery, attention to which is now specially enforced under the new rules, we must all admit that the change is most excellent. But the question has been raised, whether it is necessary that the practical surgery course should extend over six months—whether all that is embraced under this head might not be better studied in a three months' summer course. As operations on the dead body must form one element of the course, the difficulty of procuring a sufficient number of subjects will create perhaps a formidable impediment to its being carried on in the winter.

There is another point which must be considered, and on which it would be well could the schools come to a general agreement. It is true that many of the subjects which the new regulations render compulsory have been taught in most of the schools in supplementary classes.

For the most part, these have been added on without the requirement of extra fees from the students who benefit by them. The *necessary* expenses under the new rules must be increased. Should there not be a corresponding increase in the fees? You may say that this, at least, is no question of improvement of education; but I have no doubt that, if the emoluments of teachers be reduced to a minimum, and their work be increased to a maximum, teaching will be carried on in an unsatisfactory manner.

Such, amongst others, are the questions which will more than occupy our time to-night.

Whatever may be our view as to the application of the new regulations, we cannot but be glad that they all tend to enforce practical teaching, and are so far in advance of the prevalent competitive examination system, which is, I believe, producing great injury to the minds of the rising generation. There is no doubt that the primary object of the teacher is to instil into the minds of the students as much knowledge as he can, and the new rules put fresh means and appliances into his hands. But it has always appeared to me that there is one, and that perhaps the main, branch of education which is in danger of being sacrificed in this attempt to *instruct*, and that is, teaching a student the uses and powers of his own mind. At the ordinary school he should be taught how to learn; at the special college he should be taught how to think and to reason. Our endeavour should be to induce him to try as far as possible to work out questions for himself, rather than to explain everything to him. One problem worked out by independent thought would be more useful to him than twenty of which he had learned the demonstration by book. By such a process his mind will be rendered both more able and more willing to receive new truths and new ideas. Of course any information given to an intelligent being will fructify; but while a truth imparted will yield a twofold harvest, a truth *educated* will yield a hundredfold. The opportunity for this mental training is now placed more within the reach of the teacher, and it will be for us to utilise it. The task may be somewhat irksome, but it will always be beneficial. If well carried out in the practical courses, the clinical teaching will be far more interesting to the teacher, and far more useful to the student; and it is, after all, towards clinical teaching that our main endeavours must tend in the education of future practitioners.

I have said that we may congratulate ourselves on the establishment of the new regulations of the College of Surgeons; and I cannot help thinking that, whether admitted or not, the strong and unanimous opinion of so large a body of teachers as is enrolled in this Association has had some share in leading the College to frame them. It must have had the effect at least of satisfying the Council of the College that the rules would be cordially received and conscientiously acted upon by the teachers. And if this be so, have we not an answer to those who ask of what use is the Association? There is a doubt, perhaps, on the minds of some few who are of us, and work with us. For it is said that we do not represent the London schools. It is true, and it is a subject of regret; regret for our own sakes, as we are deprived of the advantage of gathering the opinions of men of experience,—regret for their sakes who are not of us, inasmuch as they lose an opportunity of advancing an object of common interest to them and to us, of learning the opinions of men of equal experience with themselves on subjects which must engage their minds as deeply as they do our own. Though we may regret that any should hold aloof from us, yet I do not see that our position is materially weakened thereby, or our usefulness diminished. We are not, and we do not aspire to be, a legislative body. We do not seek to enforce laws even on schools affiliated to us. Our function is consultative, and our end is gained if we can obtain a concurrence of opinion on unsettled points on the part of so large a majority of the schools and teachers as belongs to our Association.

And our Association has produced another beneficial effect. Those who, like myself, have had experience in former years of the difficulty of obtaining anything like cohesion for any purpose amongst the London schools must be struck with the inclination displayed amongst us to merge individual interests in common benefit. Our rivalries may remain; but the frankness with which the various systems and opinions are explained and discussed shows that it is no mean or jealous rivalry which actuates us. For one, I may express my hope that the Association will continue, and will be a permanent benefit to what we may call the great metropolitan school.

I have intentionally condensed the thoughts which have passed through my mind within the narrowest possible limits. Our time for discussion is short. Inexorable custom has obliged me to occupy some part of it in expressing my own views; but in allowing as much as possible for the full consideration of the subjects which will be brought before you, you will agree with me in thinking that I have best discharged my duties as your president.