

a rule it may be asserted that these injuries are followed by a fatal result. The delicate structure of the spinal cord and the great danger of injury to its integrity resulting in permanent destruction of its functions and ultimate disintegration of its substance, is the reason why these injuries become a source of constant anxiety to the surgeon, and of serious moment to the sufferer, as affecting in an eminent degree the chances of his ultimate recovery. These injuries are usually complicated in their nature, as in many instances there is found to exist a condition of both fracture and dislocation. But let me not be misunderstood, as it cannot be denied that either of these conditions may exist independently of the other. When we regard the irregular form of the vertebræ the overlapping of the various processes, bound together by strong ligamentous bands and cemented by powerful muscular attachment, it is difficult to conceive how an accident resulting in displacement can occur without a combination of these two forms of injury.

In the cervical region, where motion is free, and where the articular surfaces look upwards and downwards, being in a horizontal plane, dislocation may take place without fracture, or the fracture may be comparatively of little moment. The dorsal vertebræ, on the contrary, possess but slight motion; they are firmly locked together, having long processes, and in the case of the spinous process, overhanging, so that simple dislocation, unaccompanied by fracture more or less extensive, is a result hardly to be looked for.

The lumbar vertebræ again possess considerable mobility as a whole; but these, being at the base of the column, are large and strong, lacking that delicacy of formation observed in the other regions. This is obviously for the purpose of affording greater strength, to enable them to support weight, as they may be regarded as forming the foundation of the entire column. Here, again, it is difficult to conceive the possible event of dislocation occurring without fracture. These are mere points of interest to the observer, as they do not in any way modify the result, as the reduction of the dislocated bone, should such exist, or the placing a fractured vertebra in position, is hardly justifiable, as much mischief may result from excessive or violent manipulation. It does not at all follow that, because in fracture of the thigh or arm, or dislocation of the femur or humerus, it is necessary to recognise distinctly the nature of the accident, with a view to its after treatment, that the same holds with regard to the spine. Very little can be done in the majority of these injuries, although occasionally exceptional cases have been met with, where the surgeon has attempted to remedy the displacement, and some few have been attended with apparent success; but you must