

## ADDRESS IN OBSTETRICS.

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### THE TEACHING OF OBSTETRICS.

Such an address as I am requested to give on this occasion should, if possible, deal with some point of general importance and interest rather than of personal investigation or experience, and I can imagine none at the present time so important to the present and future members of the Association as the efforts which are being made to improve the teaching and training of our medical students in practical obstetrics. The faults of our methods of teaching are obvious to every thoughtful person. The difficulty in adequately removing the deficiencies is undoubtedly very great.

May we first consider some of the most obvious imperfections? These are for the most part due to the difficulty of providing practical clinical teaching. There is no large maternity hospital in London capable of accommodating the students of the various medical schools, for the four lying-in hospitals are primarily charities for the relief of poor women and training schools for monthly nurses and midwives.

Queen Charlotte's is the only lying-in hospital which admits medical students or qualified practitioners to its practice. The students, however, who take the month's course obtain clinical teaching and experience of a kind not to be easily obtained elsewhere, but unless the hospital is prepared to give up its principal work—the training of midwives and monthly nurses—in favor of the medical students, its 70 beds, accommodating 1,600 in-patients in the year, can only provide the necessary experience for a small number of the students of London. At the present time the practice is attended chiefly by qualified men, who, having found out their lack of experience, are glad to make use of the opportunities for instruction to be obtained there.

All the medical schools and lying-in hospitals have an extern maternity department, and in this department the students, under more or less organized supervision, attend poor women in their own homes. Even in the best organized of these maternities the supervision and instruction of the students are very inadequate, for the resident medical officer in charge of them is without that constant guidance and close personal contact with his chief which fall to his lot when working in the wards of a hospital. It is impossible for it to be otherwise, and it