bear in mind, gentlemen, that the serious nature of these accidents does not consist in the fracture or dislocation of the bones, but in the injury done to the spinal cord or its envelopes. If the displacement is apparent and extreme, so that it demands interference, the method of reduction will be the same, be it fracture or dislocation, or a combination of both; and our prognosis is not more or less grave in the one case than in the other. So that, in these accidents, interference, as a rule, is to be condemned, and the prospect of affording relief by severe manipulation *nil*. Indeed, we may do incalculable mischief by severe measures, as the position of the parts is such that no accurate diagnosis can be formed, Attempts at reduction of the displaced bones may, if much force be employed, increase the mischief, and the spinal canal be further altered in shape and space, so that the medulla, or its envelope, may be encroached upon by forcing a portion of the broken fragment into its substance, a result which would deprive our patient of any chance of recovery, which he may have had prior to the attempted reduction.

In regarding the mechanism of the spinal column, we will find it is destined to support weight; it acts as a medium of connection between the different extremities, affords attachment to the ribs, and, from possessing a nicely graduated flexibility, accommodates itself to the various motions of the body; at the same time it affords protection to that most vital organ, the medulla spinalis. From its construction, it is adapted to receive shock. Between each of the bodies of the vertebræ are interposed elastic cushions, which act much in the same way as do the buffers of a railway carriage, and thus the force of a blow is expended without injury. Furthermore, we must bear in mind that the entire column forms one flexible whole, as motion between any two vertebræ is limited; its motion, therefore, consists in a continuous movement between several vertebræ. To accommodate itself to the formation of the body, it consists of a series of arches; these, together, presenting somewhat the form of an italic *S*, so that the whole column possesses resiliency, acting like a curved spring, and which, in the act of falling on the feet in jumping or walking, breaks the concussion, which otherwise would occur.

There are other circumstances which have reference to the anatomical construction of the parts which deserve special attention. These are the provision made by nature for the safe protection of the medulla spinalis.

The medulla is smaller than its bony case. It extends in the adult from the foramen magnum to the centre of the body of the first lumbar vertebræ, where it terminates in a slender filament of grey substance,