

spina bifida. The last word has by no means been said in connection with this subject, and it would seem to be desirable to obtain as many reports as possible in regard to the treatment of this condition. Rose and Carless in their excellent manual say: "The majority of these cases are best left alone," etc. Should operative treatment be deemed advisable, they claim, from statistics, the best results from Morton's method. This is in line with the well-known report of the London Clinical Society, and also with the statistics given in Morton's own work, published twelve years ago. Thanks to Mayo Robson, Nicoll of Glasgow, and others, the open method of treatment by excision can now furnish statistics even superior to those claimed by the advocates of Morton's method.

The London Clinical Society which investigated the subject carefully, found a mortality of 38 per cent. after treatment by Morton's method, and yet were constrained to recommend this as the best, in fact, the only justifiable, method of treatment.

Nicoll, who has reported upwards of thirty cases operated upon by the open method, says: "My experience has been such as to convince me that, in the matter of mortality, it would probably not be difficult to produce a series of cases operated on for spina bifida, in which the mortality would compare favorably with that of the operation for the radical cure of hernia. To obtain this result it would be necessary to reject for operation cases in which the sac had burst or was sloughing, and cases with very pronounced hydrocephalus. A moderate degree of hydrocephalus I have found no bar to success."

This great divergence of opinion and practice in regard to the treatment of a grave malformation occurring once in every one thousand births must be my excuse for this brief report.

The cases which I shall summarize are eight in number, and have all, with one exception, been operated on more than a year ago. Seven were meningoceles, one meningo-myelocoele; seven were in young children, one in an adult. As to evidence of nerve involvement they may be classified as follows:

One case of paraplegia, with complete loss of control over bladder and rectum (this case, by the way, was fatal, and was a simple meningocele); three cases of club-foot—one single, two double (two of these cases were meningoceles, one meningo-myelocoele); two cases of hydrocephalus, both of which terminated fatally (as to previous convulsions, the histories were imperfect and doubtful, and are therefore omitted). Four cases were normal so far as development was concerned, except that in one, the adult, there was marked asymmetry of the head and face.

Of these eight cases there were six cases of *permanent*