has met with the most active and determined resistance on the part of the profession in Ireland. Sir Henry Marsh, Dr. Stokes, and Mr. Cusack have proceeded to London to counteract, if possible, the Medical Charities’ Bill, founded on the views of the commissioners. At a meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons, held on the 22d of April, a series of resolutions, condemnatory of the scheme, was unanimously adopted. The college expresses the utmost surprise and regret at learning that legislative measures are in preparation for transferring the government of the medical charities of Ireland to the poor-law authorities. The college affirms that the imperfections of the present system have been greatly exaggerated, and that the existing charities admit of being reformed, without destruction of their present organisation, and the substituting a plan of doubtful efficacy.

The college justly observes, that the proposal to sacrifice £42,000 per annum, derived from voluntary subscriptions, contrasts, in the most extraordinary manner, with the beggarly parsimony of the commissioners in their expenditure for the medical relief of the poor now entrusted to their care; and it regards such a sacrifice as uncalled for and wasteful. The present method of raising funds by county-rates is neither inefficient nor unpopular, and it would be premature and impolitic to abandon this method for a poor-rate, which may prove an unproductive or even an obnoxious tax. Finally, the college protests against giving the poor-law authorities power to remove the present fever hospitals and dispensaries from the situations which they now occupy, because such is equivalent to a power of appointing medical officers to these institutions.

The arguments of the college are conclusive, and cannot, we should think, fail to produce due effect.

At a numerous meeting of the Midland Medical Association of Ireland, resolutions to the same effect were also unanimously adopted. These measures will, we sincerely trust, induce the executive government to pause before it hands over the medical charities of Ireland to the poor-law commissioners. The scheme is, in truth, a most preposterous one. What would people in this country say if the commissioners proposed to abandon one half of the sums so sufficiently furnished by the English public for the relief of the sick poor, and to levy an equivalent through the poor-rate? The idea would be scouted, not only as an absurdity, but as an impertinence. What would the governors of our English county infirmaries and dispensaries think if the poor-law authorities were to come to them and say, “We will relieve you of the trouble and expense of these institutions; they shall henceforward be supported out of the poor-rate, and we will undertake the duty of managing them ourselves.”

The commissioners are not yet quite barefaced enough to propose absurdities of this kind in England; like the political “shave-beggars,” they commence with Ireland, where so many deeds of injustice and oppression have been done unheeded. But if their attempt be successful, who shall say where their pretensions will stop? The poor-law commissioners have, we firmly believe, conceived the hopeful scheme of bringing the whole medical profession of these countries under their jurisdiction. Already have they enslaved the union officers; their grasp is now firmly fixed on the medical charities of Ireland; and the time is probably not far distant when the independence of the whole profession in England will be attacked by an attempt to convert the poor-law commission into a permanent board of health.

LECTURE
ON
TWO NEWLY-DISCOVERED QUADRUPEDS,
THE MYLODON AND GLYPTODON.
Delivered on May 4,
By Robert Owen, Esq., F.R.S., &c.

Mr. Owen delivered a lecture in the library of the College of Surgeons, on Wednesday evening, on the nature and affinities of the mylodons and glyptodons, two extinct animals, recently discovered in a fossil state in South America, specimens of which had been added to the museum within the last twelvemonth.

Mr. Owen introduced the subject by pointing out and demonstrating the application of comparative anatomy to the investigation of the remains of those animals, which have long since passed away from the theatre of animated nature. He gave a brief notice of the labours of John Hunter in this interesting field of research, and proceeded afterwards to speak more particularly of those of Cuvier, to whom a wide field of discovery was opened in the tertiary strata below the catacombs of Paris. To Cuvier we owe the principle by which alone fossil remains can be studied, the principle of correlation or co-existence of animal structure—as, for example, let a single bone be taken, the least significant, the last phalanx of the fore foot. The comparative anatomist will see, by its formation, if it has constituted a part of a hoof, and if so, he will know that the animal to which it belonged has lived on vegetable food, and having occasion to pass rapidly from pasture to pasture, the rotatory motion of the fore-arm would be useless, and he would consequently expect to find the bones fixed, and a corresponding modification of the humerus. The teeth, again, would be implanted in a particular form, and have flat surfaces for grinding the food, and the cranium be so shaped as to admit of the attachment of the muscles necessary for the grinding process. In addition, he would infer the existence of an alimentary canal, suited for the digestion of vegetable food. If, on the other hand, the phalanx was of the long claw shape, the forearm would possess the full rotatory power, and
the humerus and jaws would be modified accordingly; the teeth would be compressed, and let in between each other like the blades of scissors; so as to be adapted for tearing flesh; the cranium would be modified in shape, by an extensive origin for the temporal muscle; and the other structures in like manner for the digestion of animal food. Thus has the comparative anatomist been enabled to decide on the previous existence of large animals, both herbivorous and carnivorous, much larger than those of the same species in existence at the present time. Thus the remains of immense lions have been found in caves in Somersetshire, while in Yorkshire have been discovered the fossil bones of the hyena, an animal which is now to be met with only in Africa. A huge species of bear, also, far exceeding in size the grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains in North America, used to prowl over temperate Europe, proofs of which are met with even in our own country.

By the principle of correlation, Cuvier discovered and traced two extinct animals, the palaeotherium and the anoplotherium. Among some organic remains which were presented to him, he received two varieties of grinding teeth, adapted for vegetable food, the hard substance of the enamel of the grinding ridges of which presented two distinct patterns, the one nearly that of the teeth of the rhinoceros, the other nearly that of the ruminant animals. Together with these were found some scattered bones, among which were astragali, presenting two distinct structures, the principal difference consisting in the anterior articulating surfaces. Where these were unequally divided, he considered that it indicated an unequal number of toes, as in the rhinoceros; when the division was equal, the number of toes was equal, as in the ruminant animals; and he concluded, accordingly, that the unequal surfaced astragalus belonged to the animal whose tooth resembled those of the rhinoceros, the other bone to the ruminant beast. In this way Cuvier constructed the animals, and his views and opinions were afterwards fully confirmed when the complete skeletons were obtained. After this, fossil bones acquired an interest they had not previously possessed.

The skeleton of the megatherium, now at Madrid, was discovered in tertiary deposit near Buenos Ayres, by the governor of which place it was procured, and shipped for Spain. Cuvier, from the descriptions furnished by the Spanish anatomists, decided it was a large herbivorous animal, having general indications of affinity to the sloth, but in the structure of the feet resembling the ant-eater—of the teeth, the armadillo. He considered that there were only four grinding teeth in the upper jaw; and, from information received by him during the latter part of his life, believed that it possessed a nearer resemblance to the armadillo, in being protected by a coat of mail, pieces of compressed bone having been found, which were united laterally by sutures. Of this Sir Woodbine Parish transmitted a specimen, which Cuvier believed to belong to the megatherium.

With the exception of pointing out its relation to the sloth, its vegetable diet, and its scratching up roots, Cuvier says nothing of the affinities of the megatherium. Sir Woodbine Parish sent one of its teeth, which, like the sloth's, has not any fangs, but has a large cavity underneath for the dental pulp, by which fresh layers of dental substance were secreted, to supply the waste caused by grinding the food. Another specimen, sent by Mr. Darwin, shows five teeth in the upper jaw, which teeth are identical in their internal structure with those of the sloth, these latter differing altogether from those of other animals.

The proportions of the colossal frame of this animal have been doubted by some anatomists, who consider the skeleton at Madrid to be compounded of bones from different animals. What was wanting to prove that this is not the case, has been supplied by the skeleton of the mylodon, which is almost identical with that of the megatherium, and, indeed, constitutes a sub-species, or megatheroid variety. It is a member of the same natural family. Mr. Darwin, who was the first to notice it in South America, sent a portion of the lower jaw, containing four teeth, which differ somewhat in form, but are the same in structure, as those of the megatherium. They are devoid of fangs, have a large surface, and the pulpal cavity, and are composed of the same three substances as the teeth of the megatherium, and have no true enamel. From these teeth, the conclusion would be drawn that the forefoot was rotatory, the pelvis very large, and the head small, and from the zygomatic bone the same long process descending, owing to a modification of the masseter muscle, and so it is found to be. On examining the fore foot, the hoof and claw are seen to be combined, the only instance known of such an union; the posterior portion of the foot constitutes the hoof, the anterior the claw. The bones of the forefoot admit of flexion and extension, of pronation and supination. They are bones of great strength, and, compared with the long, slender ones of the sloth, show they were intended for a different use. With these large bones of the forefoot, there are necessarily large processes at the elbow for the moving muscles, a large scapula, and a strong clavicle. Before the discovery of the megatherium, the human being was the largest known animal possessing a clavicle. The pelvis is of enormous proportions, and apparently very strong muscles arose therefrom to move the trunk. The femur, tibia, and fibula are short, and of very great breadth; the hind feet are composed partly of hoof and partly of claw; and lastly, the tail is large and powerful.

The teeth tell us that the mylodon had the same food as the sloth, but it appears impossible that so large an animal could be so supplied with nourishment, while its immense strength better fitted it for uprooting and tearing down trees, than for climbing them. In the present state of creation, there are few mammals that feed on leaves or trees, but such as do are of the largest size, as the elephant and giraffe. Now there is evidence in the cranium of the mylodon, that like the giraffe, it possessed a tongue of unusual size and strength, which is ascertained by the size of the foramina, through which are transmitted
the fifth and ninth pairs of nerves—judging from these, the tongue of the mylodon must have been at least four or five times as large as that of the giraffe.

By taking into consideration the principle of the correlation of animal structures, by examining the skeleton of the armadillo, the question whether this animal is provided with a coat of mail, can be decided. The superior oblique and transverse processes of the spinal column in the armadillo are exceedingly elongated, to give support to its coat of mail; but nothing of the kind can be found in the megatherium, and, as collateral evidence, may be taken the fact, that pieces of armour have never been found in conjunction with the remains of this animal.

But since then, there has been made a discovery of the remains of another large animal in South America, more nearly resembling the armadillo, and differing from the sloth. Its remains were found near Buenos Ayres, a country exceedingly rich in fossils, whence have been obtained, besides the megetherium, the mylodon, the megalonix, &c. Of this discovery, Sir Woodbine Parish was informed by a correspondent, and the President and Council of the College having been made aware thereof, took measures to secure it. They have now in their possession the coat of armour of this gigantic species of armadillo, the glyptodon, but the bones were too friable to be removed.

The examination of fossil remains supplies the information that, in ancient times, the primateval forests of Great Britain were traversed by the elephant and the mastodon, the lakes by hippopotami and anapotharia, the marshes were occupied by the palootherium and the rhinoceros, and the caverns by immense lions, bears, and hyenas. The remains of man have not been found in connection with any of these animals, unless accidentally introduced, nor in the tertiary nor antediluvian strata. From botanical and zoological facts, it may be concluded that the temperature of Great Britain, at this time, more nearly approached that of Paradise than it does at present.

Mr. Owen was greeted with considerable applause at the termination of his very interesting lecture, which was illustrated by a very fine skeleton of the mylodon, the coat of armour of the glyptodon, several specimens of fossil remains of the megatherium, and of the other animals which were alluded to by the lecturer, as also by some well-executed drawings. The library, in which the lecture was delivered, was exceedingly crowded, many of the members having assembled as early as eight o'clock.

NORTHERN HOSPITAL, LIVERPOOL.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—I send you the "Liverpool Mail," of this day, which contains a short account of the election of a surgeon to the Northern Hospital of this town; an institution not yet of ten years standing, but which, from its being situated near the docks, has been found, and every day is more and more proved, to be a most useful charity, and an excellent school for practical surgery, from the formidable accidents almost daily taking place amongst the shipping of that locality. Indeed the usefulness has been so evident, that a second one, similarly situated, has been formed and opened at the southern extremity of the docks, within these last few months. The appointment and servitude of the medical and surgical officers are limited to about ten years, which I consider a great improvement, and justice to both the profession and the public; and I have not only been long of opinion, but expressed it privately and publicly, that no physician or surgeon ought to be elected to an hospital unless he will promise to give clinical instruction to medical pupils, both in and out of the hospitals, by lectures, whenever a sufficient class can be formed for that purpose; and for this, they should be encouraged by a small stipend from the funds of the hospital, aided by moderate fees from the pupils. This plan would secure for the public, in succession, judicious practitioners and skilful operators, and be such a stimulus to exertion amongst these officers, who may be appointed early in life, as to make them more indifferent about lucrative practice, until time, practice, and experience, entitle them to it. This impression of responsibility, I am inclined to think, is daily gaining ground; and, although, I am not aware that clinical lectures have been yet determined upon at either the Northern or the Southern Hospitals, some have been attempted at the Infirmary; and this, I believe, will speedily again be tried with some energy, and, it is to be hoped, more perseveringly.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS JEFFREYS.

Liverpool, May 2, 1842.

A meeting of the trustees of the Northern Hospital was held at the Clarendon Rooms, yesterday, for the purpose of electing an honorary surgeon for that hospital, in consequence of the resignation of Mr. Gill, who retired on account of ill health.

The Chairman having stated the object for which the meeting had been convened, called on the proposers and seconds of the respective candidates to proceed.

Mr. Henry Holmes proposed Mr. Joseph King, jun.

Mr. George Highfield seconded the nomination of Mr. King.

Mr. Richard Bateson proposed Mr. Ellis Jones.

Mr. Joseph Cooper seconded the nomination of Mr. Jones.


Mr. Ambrose lace seconded the nomination of Mr. Bainbrigge.

The poll was closed at three o'clock, when the numbers were,—For Mr. Bainbrigge, 326; for Mr. Jones, 130; for Mr. King, 129. Mr. Bainbrigge was accordingly elected.