

been restored to the position of earning their livelihood, the relief to the community in the conversion of dependent invalids into sound and useful members of the body corporate; think of all this amount of good done as represented by the eight hundred and forty-one women who have been cured of diseased appendages in the last fifteen years at the Chelsea Hospital for Women. Then add to these the thousands of women similarly cured in other institutions all over the civilized world, and you will gain some idea of the good that has resulted from the decreased mortality of abdominal operations.

We come, thirdly and lastly, to the subject of fibroid tumors of the uterus. Here we have a condition more inherently dangerous than the other two, leading more often to a directly fatal result; and, short of a fatal issue, causing prolonged suffering and disablement. Here, again, we have a condition in which the operative death-rate must exert a marked influence on the advice that we give to our patients. Twenty years ago this operative death-rate was from 20 to 40 per cent.; and it is evident that it was only in cases where a fatal result was threatened that so dangerous an operation could be recommended. In the much larger majority of cases, there was no question of life being at stake, the reason for operation would be only the relief of suffering, and it is seldom that patients yearn for death or are willing to incur a very great risk, merely to be relieved of suffering. It is better, after all, to live as an invalid than to die cured. Now, when a patient with fibroids has to be told that the resources of medicine are exhausted and that the succor of surgery is more cruel than kind, it is a great comfort to be able to hold out some kind of hope, however unsubstantial; and so a fairy tale was built up and decorated to represent a scientific theory, to the effect that the menopause was the natural cure for fibroids. And patients were told, in all seriousness and good faith, "You must wait for the change of life, and then these tumors will shrink and disappear and you will get well." And the patients went on patiently draining their life-blood away, carrying enormous tumors that prevented them from getting about, hoping against hope that the delayed menopause would arrive, like some millennium, to give them peace. Some of them survived the worst troubles and escaped with their lives, a few of them regaining a measure of health, and the remainder remaining more or less permanent invalids. Others found that the menopause, when it came, came not to bless but to curse, bringing in its train degenerative changes, infection, sepsis, and death. Now I do not know what is the state