

tions of the limbs. Out of 1,656 cases of amputation performed in the hospitals of Paris and collected by Messieurs Malgaigne and Tielat, 803 died, or nearly one in every two. Dr. Fenwick has collected together from various sources 4,937 cases of amputations of the limbs. Of these, 1,562 died, or nearly one in every three or four. 'The assertion, observes Dr. Fenwick, 'that one person out of every three who suffers an amputation perishes would have been repudiated a few years ago as a libel upon the profession, and yet such is the rate of mortality observed in nearly 5,000 cases.' 'Are the results of amputation,' in conclusion asked Sir James Simpson, 'in dispensary, private or country practice as deplorable?' Adequate data have not been collected. Certainly the general belief of the profession is that in country practice amputations are not so frightfully fatal."

In order to settle this point, if possible, he collected extensive statistics of the results of amputation in rural practice. These he obtained by addressing a circular letter, with an accompanying schedule to a great number of medical men practising in the provincial and rural parts of England and Scotland, requesting them to furnish him with the results of the limb amputations which had been performed by them in their private practice. The returns obtained from these applications numbered altogether 2,098 cases of amputation. The total number of deaths was 226, i. e., one in every 9.2 died or 10.8 in every 100. He compared with this mortality that of a similar number of limb amputations performed in the Royal Infirmaries of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and in nine of the leading London Hospitals. In these 2,089 limb amputations performed in eleven great hospitals by surgeons of skill and experience he found that no fewer than 855 had died, i. e., 1 in 2.4. In other words, almost one half of the patients operated on, died. Simpson concludes his pamphlet thus:

"This excess in about 2,100 limb amputations, of 629 deaths in hospital practice as compared with our rural villages and cottages; in large wards as compared with isolated rooms, is certainly much greater and more pronounced than I myself expected when I began the present inquiry. But must the calling of this dismal death-roll go on unchallenged and unchecked? Shall this pitiless and deliberate sacrifice of human life to conditions which are more or less preventable be continued or arrested? Do not these terrible figures plead eloquently and clamantly for a revision and reform of our existing hospital system?"

The pamphlet from which I have thus freely quoted was published and scattered in great profusion and in all directions in the Spring of 1869, and if it did not succeed in bringing about the reform of hospitals which its author desired, it was not because he died only a year after its publication. There were many ardent disciples who would gladly have