

In the Dublin Hospital Reports for 1827, I came across the narrative of a case of excision of the knee by Mr. Crampton, afterwards Sir Philip Crampton and Surgeon-General of the Forces. He describes the patient, a girl, coming into the operating room with great fortitude and even cheerfulness, but, on the instant the knife was applied to the skin she became so ungovernable that four strong assistants could, with the utmost difficulty retain her upon the table. "The removal of the extremity of the femur was a work of great difficulty and danger as when the knife was passing between the bone and popliteal artery no entreaty could induce the poor girl, whom terror seemed to have deprived of her reason, to remain one moment at rest. She struggled so violently with both limbs that it was with a degree of labour and anxiety I had never before experienced that I at length succeeded in passing the edge of the knife round the condyles posteriorly thus detaching the divided end of the femur." It is interesting to know that the patient recovered and had a useful leg. "I could walk long distances without discomfort," she said, "and a year after she was able to stand or walk the length of a day."

An interesting account is given of a medical friend of Sir James Y. Simpson who was so unfortunate as to lose a limb by amputation. Here is his pathetic description :- "The operation was a more tedious one than some which involve much greater mutilation. It necessitated cruel cutting through inflamed and morbidly sensitive parts, and could not be despatched by a few strokes of the knife. Of the agony it occasioned, I will say nothing. Suffering so great as I underwent cannot be expressed in words, and thus fortunately cannot be recalled. The particular pangs are now forgotten : but the blank whirlwind of emotion, the horror of great darkness, and the sense of desertion by God and man, bordering close upon despair, which swept through my mind and overwhelmed my heart, I can never forget however gladly I would do so. During the operation, in spite of the pain it occasioned, my senses were preternaturally acute, as I have been told they generally are in patients under such circumstances. I watched all that the surgeon did with fascinated intensity. I still recall with unwelcome vividness the spreading out of the instruments, the twisting of the tourniquet, the first incision, the fingering of the sawed bone, the sponge pressed on the flap, the tying of the blood-vessels, the stitching of the skin, and the bloody dismembered limb lying on the floor. Those are not pleasant remembrances. For a long time they haunted me, and even now they are easily resuscitated; and though they cannot bring back the suffering attending the events which gave them a place in my memory, they can occasion a suffering of their own, and be the cause of a disquiet which favours neither mental nor bodily