

(the only money, with a very trifling exception, at present received from the funds of the college by any members—except the curators—not on the council. At the College of Physicians there are four examiners, and the president, with about £80 a year divided among them! When the age of the present three senior members of the Court of Examiners is considered, it will, I think, occur to every one, that they should be relieved of so troublesome an office at a time when they must so wish for repose, and for time to think of something else than mere mundane affairs; and looking at the time they have held office, I think they would have little to complain of from such an arrangement. They have enjoyed the sweets of office for above twenty years, and in this time cannot have received among them much less than £25,000. The fixed salary is a question, I think, of much importance; that it should not depend upon the number of candidates who pass an examination, which must always be open to the objection, that it may be supposed that candidates are improperly admitted members.

3. The removal of the disqualification for a seat in the council by those gentlemen who practise midwifery, but not pharmacy. How absurd that such men as Mr. Blagden, Mr. Stone, or Mr. Gream, should be disqualified for a seat in the council of their own college?

4. The alteration of a mere majority of votes being sufficient to attain a seat in the council to a majority of two-thirds of the votes.

5. An alteration in the present mode of being obliged to vote for or against every candidate for a seat in the council according to seniority, without any reference to the merits of other candidates. What I would suggest would be, that the electors should have the option of choosing from a certain number of the senior candidates, (say ten or twenty,) without absolutely passing over any one, and that a fellow might appear as a candidate as often as he pleases—so, if not chosen in one year he may be in another.

6. That on a fellow becoming eligible for a seat in the council, he be required to give the secretary notice of such alteration to enable him to enjoy such right.

7. That the council do annually publish a clear statement of the accounts, mentioning what each person may individually receive—not, as now, lumped together, so as to give little or no information; it is impossible to make out by the present statement whether there is more money spent on the museum than on the Court of Examiners or on the council dinners.

I hope, Sir, you will excuse the hasty and crude mode in which these suggestions are offered; but it appears to me that there is no time to be lost, and I am anxious that you should early comment on them, and that they should be brought under the notice of the committee of the council, to whom the alteration of the charter is entrusted.

On the grand subject of "the franchise of the members," I must defer any observations I may have to make for the present, (should you think the above worthy of consideration.)

I am, Sir,

A SINCERE WELL-WISHER TO THE  
ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS  
OF ENGLAND.

London, Dec. 4, 1849.

## DR. SIMPSON ON OPERATIVE MIDWIFERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the last number of THE LANCET there is a review of Dr. Collins's "Life and Writings of Dr. Clarke." The author of the review describes the work in language which would lead one to suppose that it could have afforded him abundance of excellent practical passages to lay before your readers in the way of extracts. And, no doubt, many such passages are to be found in its pages. But your reviewer has thought fit to insert, instead, a long extract from another and totally different production of Dr. Collins's, upon another and totally different subject than the life of Dr. Clarke; and he has evidently travelled willingly out of his road for this purpose. This intruded extract has, as I have said, no relation to Dr. Clarke's life or writings, but contains merely a variety of misrepresentations regarding the practice of the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital and of the late Dr. Hamilton. These misrepresentations, when originally published by Dr. Collins, in Dr. Clay's *Obstetric Journal*, were accompanied by other mis-statements of evidently so very erroneous a character as not to require any refutation. But the extract quoted in your review acquires more weight when isolated and transferred to your pages. I beg therefore to be allowed to correct one or two of its principal mis-statements.

1. During the first two years of its institution—viz., from

1844 to 1846, the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital was located in a small ill-ventilated house in St. John-street. In the *Monthly Journal of Medical Science* for November, 1848, (p. 329,) I published a report of the practice of the hospital while located in St. John-street. Among numerous other matters, I stated that among the 1475 women delivered under the superintendence of the institution, eleven deaths occurred, or one in every 134 of the mothers died. Of these eleven deaths, seven occurred among the 374 cases delivered in the hospital, and four among the 1101 out-cases. And of the eleven deaths, seven were from puerperal fever. I have elsewhere further remarked, that "the mortality among the in-patients (one in fifty-three) was somewhat above the proper standard, and the mortality among the out-patients (one in 275) was somewhat below its standard, in consequence of out-patients, when severely ill, being sometimes transferred to the hospital, and in one or two instances dying there."\*

The extract, which your reviewer gives very incorrectly, represents the mortality among the patients of the institution during the two years over which the report extended, as amounting to one death among every twenty-one mothers delivered, instead of as one death among every 132 mothers delivered. The report in question was, before publication, laid by me (as stated in the introductory remarks published with it)† both before the Medico-Chirurgical and Obstetrical Societies of Edinburgh. And your reviewer, in his quotation, adds that a different result was stated at the meeting of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, at which it was read, as reported at least in the *Monthly Journal* for June, 1847. But I need scarcely add, that I am most assuredly not in any way whatever answerable for the mistakes and absurdities of that or any other reports of the meetings of the Medico-Chirurgical Society. Nothing, I think, could be conceived more ridiculous, than that the author of a statistical paper, read before any society, was answerable for the blunders of any unauthorized reporter of it. The editor of the *Monthly Journal* has already told Dr. Collins that I had nought whatever to do with this report, and in a way that might have prevented its repetition in your pages, and which I shall append in a footnote.‡ The books, I may add, of the hospital, are public records, and patent to inspection. In Dublin, I believe, they are reckoned the private property of the master, and removed by him. During most part of the above two years, these books of the Maternity Hospital were kept most carefully by Dr. Martin Barry, who was acting as resident physician, and whose name is an ample guarantee for their faithfulness and accuracy.

2. The extract in your review is placed in such a way as might lead your readers to suppose that instrumental interference was often had recourse to in the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital. In Dr. Clarke's Dublin Hospital practice, one out of every 162 mothers was delivered instrumentally; one out of every 728 being a forceps case, and one out of every 208 being a crotchet one. In the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital, one out of every 354 mothers was delivered instrumentally; the forceps were used in one out of every 472 cases; the crotchet in one out of the 1417 cases. The

\* Provincial Journal for December 13, 1848.

† The Edinburgh Maternity Hospital was opened in St. John-street in May, 1844, and continued in this locality till May, 1846, when the charity was removed to its present premises in Milton House, Canon-gate. The following report comprehends an analysis of the obstetric practice of the institution during the two years in which it was located in St. John-street. The report was drawn up and communicated to the Medico-Chirurgical Society twelve or eighteen months ago; and its publication was for a time postponed, under the hope that I might find leisure to render it still more minute and extensive. As, however, I have little prospect of fulfilling that wish, I now publish it, with the permission of the Obstetrical Society, in the printed account of their transactions. And, I trust, that the continuation of the reports of the institution will, betimes, be drawn up and communicated to the Society by some of the younger and more active medical officers attached to the hospital.—*Introductory paragraph to Report of Maternity Hospital in Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, for November, 1848, p. 329.

‡ "Erratum in our number for June, 1847.—An error of our reporter in the above number, at p. 934, in giving an account of a short communication read by Professor Simpson to the Medico-Chirurgical Society, has unfortunately escaped notice till now, when it has been raised into importance by a letter of Dr. Collins in the "Obstetric Record." It is stated in our report (of which we claim the entire responsibility), that 'one out of every twenty-one mothers died.' In the same report, the total number of cases is stated at 1400, which is also erroneous. The true numbers are eleven deaths in 1475 cases, or one in 134. The careful and elaborate report by Dr. Simpson, in which these numbers are given, appeared in our November number (1848), and is quoted by Dr. Collins in the letter to which we refer, in order to contrast it with our statement, the inaccuracy of which is but too obvious to every unbiassed person. We beg, that for the sake of our peace of mind, if not of his own, Dr. Collins will, for the future, abstain from using the errors of our printers and reporters as a ground for throwing doubts upon the authentic and detailed statements of Professor Simpson, or any one else with whom he may happen to be engaged in professional controversy. Eds. M. J.—*Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, January 1849, p. 494.

following table, published by me in the report referred to, shows at greater length the proportion of cases in which instruments have been used in the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital, and in several other different obstetric institutions:—

Table, showing the Proportion of Instrumental Deliveries, and of Deliveries by the Forceps, and by Craniotomy, in different Obstetric Institutions.

Name of Reporter.	Total No. of Labours Reported.	Proportion of Instrumental Deliveries.	Proportion of Deliveries by Forceps.	Proportion of Deliveries by Craniotomy.
Siebold—Berlin .....	2093	1 in 7	1 in 7	1 in 2093
Busch—Berlin .....	2056	1 " 11	1 " 12	1 " 342
Carus—Dresden .....	2549	1 " 13	1 " 14	1 " 283
Nægele—Heidelberg...	1711	1 " 31	1 " 31	1 " 1711
Bland—Westminster..	1897	1 " 95	1 " 158	1 " 237
Beatty—Dublin .....	1182	1 " 98	1 " 131	1 " 394
Collins—Dublin .....	16,664	1 " 115	1 " 617	1 " 141
Churchill—Dublin.....	1640	1 " 117	1 " 546	1 " 149
Lever—London .....	4666	1 " 137	1 " 518	1 " 186
Boer—Vienna.....	9589	1 " 199	1 " 274	1 " 737
Lachapelle—Paris .....	22,243	1 " 252	1 " 293	1 " 1854
Ramsbotham—London	48,682	1 " 322	1 " 553	1 " 773
Simpson—Edinburgh..	1417	1 " 354	1 " 472	1 " 1417

From the Monthly Journal of Medical Science for Nov. 1848, p. 337.

3. The extract which your reviewer gives is calculated further to throw blame upon the practice of the late Professor Hamilton, as it is insinuated that the mortality in the Edinburgh Hospital, a quarter of a century ago, under his care, was as great as one in twenty-one of the mothers.

On this point, permit me one or two observations. In various parts of his writings,\* Dr. Collins has explicitly declared (as every candid physician does) that the occasional and epidemic occurrence of deaths in lying-in-hospitals from puerperal fever is so far "accidental" as to be beyond medical control. To blame any man for losing, in hospital practice, cases from puerperal fever is, he (Dr. Collins) correctly avers, "totally devoid of justice;" and "All physicians (says he) who have ever had charge of a lying-in-hospital are but too well acquainted with the fact that puerperal fever is the great source of mortality in such institutions. It has been solely owing to the occasional prevalence of this disease, that the mortality in our hospital has been greater since Dr. Kennedy's appointment than for four years preceding, &c.†"

During Dr. Kennedy's mastership of the Dublin Hospital, to which these remarks of Dr. Collins refer, 13,167 women were delivered in the institution; and out of these, 222 died, or one in every fifty-eight. And this, according to Dr. Collins, is not "more than ONE HALF‡ of several former periods in our hospital" in Dublin.

Dr. Collins became Master of the Dublin Hospital in November, 1826. During that year (1826) eighty-one out of the 2440 women delivered in the hospital died, or one mother in every 31.

During the first three years of his mastership, one in every fifty-three mothers delivered in the house died, puerperal fever being occasionally prevalent.

In 1821-22 puerperal fever raged extensively in Edinburgh. Two large octavo volumes were published on this special Edinburgh puerperal epidemic of 1821-22, by Dr. Macintosh and Dr. Campbell. During these two epidemic years, 358 women were delivered in the Edinburgh Hospital; and twelve of the number, or one in thirty, died of this puerperal fever, or, as Dr. Hamilton denominated the disease, "puerperal peritonitis." It is to this period of misfortune that Dr. Collins's ungenerous remark on the fatality of Dr. Hamilton's hospital practice refers; at the same time that Dr. Collins misreports the mortality as being one in twenty-one, whilst it was one in thirty. But, Mr. Editor, I believe you will agree with me in thinking that, as Dr. Collins has himself declared, it is "totally devoid of justice" to judge of the results of practice in the Dublin Hospital by taking into account the deaths from puerperal fever; it is equally devoid of justice to pursue,

\* See, for example, "Practical Treatise," p. 365; *Dublin Journal*, vol. xi. p. 42; xiii. p. 406, &c.

† See Testimonials and other Documents in favour of Dr. Evory Kennedy, p. 96, (Letter of Dr. Collins.)

‡ This word is printed thus, in capitals, in Dr. Collins' letter.

as Dr. Collins has done, a different rule in judging of the results of practice in the Edinburgh Hospital. For I feel assured that you will hold, with me, that the rule which applies to one man or to one hospital, must be meted out to other men and other hospitals.

Permit me to add, that I have elsewhere shown, at sufficient length,\* that if we subtract the deaths from puerperal fever among the patients of the Dublin and Edinburgh hospitals for a series of fourteen years in the last, and seven years in the first, the results are, that from other obstetric dangers and pathological complications, one in every 263 mothers was lost under Dr. Hamilton, in Edinburgh, and one in every 152 mothers under Dr. Collins, in Dublin. During four years, when puerperal fever was absent from the Dublin Hospital, Dr. Collins lost only one patient in 186. In a report of the Edinburgh Lying-in Hospital, published in the end of 1840, I had the pleasure of stating, that during the preceding sixteen months, (when puerperal fever was absent,) among 212 in-patients, and 718 out-patients, who had been delivered, only one death had occurred among the mothers, (one in 930.)

Let me observe, in conclusion, that the reported mortality among the patients of the Dublin Lying-in Hospital ought to be smaller than that of most other similar hospitals, not only from the very ample accommodation and means, but from the rule of the house of dismissing the patients, when practicable, as early as "the eighth or tenth day" after delivery.† By this rule several causes of disease and death are of course avoided, to attacks of which women are still subject after that date, as phlegmasia dolens, puerperal mania, &c. Hence, among Dr. Collins's able and interesting record of the 16,414 deliveries which occurred during his mastership, not a case of death from, or indeed of an attack of, phlegmasia dolens or puerperal mania is reported.

Believe me, that I deeply regret being obliged to take up your valuable space or my own time by the present note; and trusting you and your readers will kindly excuse me troubling them with it,

I remain, yours &c.,

Edinburgh, December 6, 1849.

J. Y. SIMPSON.

## TREATMENT OF UNHEALTHY INFLAMMATIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I regret exceedingly the acrimonious and sarcastic tone of Mr. Broke Gallwey's remarks, which appeared in THE LANCET, Dec. 1st; always objectionable, it is so peculiarly upon matters affecting vital interests. The case is shortly this: I objected (I trust in no offensive terms) to his use of the expression unhealthy inflammation, as implying that there are healthy inflammations. He replies by a classification of inflammations, and a wholly irrelevant account of latent and developed poisons, but gives no examples of healthy inflammation. I know of no exception, and a reference to my letter will show, that Mr. Gallwey has misrepresented me, as to the process set up by the "vis medicatrix naturæ." If Mr. Gallwey will persevere in the use of such expressions as unhealthy inflammations, and morbid poisons, I must leave him to revel in his own imaginations. His observations respecting healthy ulcers, instead of assisting him, is decidedly against him. We say an ulcer looks healthy in respect of its tendency to heal, and the subsidence of inflammation, the great impediment to that result. His remark upon my assertion, that the same treatment would apply to the same disease in Little France or St. James's-square, is a mere repetition of the prejudice against depletion, which I have reprobated with an earnestness proportioned to its mischievous tendency. The maxim, "verum in uno, verum in omni," is misunderstood, or misapplied. Mr. Gallwey would do well to correct his metaphysics, as well as his physics. His concluding quotation, well digested and assimilated, he would find productive of the most salutary effects; I commend it to his serious consideration; and will only add, that the interests of legitimate science are ill advanced by spurious logic and pseudo-criticism. Regretting the necessity for thus troubling you, I have the honour to be, Sir, your every obedient servant,

Southampton-street, Fitzroy-square, Dec. 1849.

JOHN LANGLEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As it is acknowledged to be of the utmost importance that terms having an indisputable significance should be adopted in preference to those which admit of doubt, I am induced to make a few remarks on Mr. Broke Gallwey's letter

\* Two Letters to Dr. Collins, President of the King and Queen's College of Physicians of Ireland, &c. Edinburgh: Sutherland & Knox.

† Reports of Dr. Collins, p. 500; and of Drs. Hardy and M'Clintock, p. 57.