ON THE
USE OF THE SPECULUM
IN THE
DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF UTERINE
DISEASES.

BY
ROBERT LEE, M.D. F.R.S.
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,
PHYSICIAN TO THE BRITISH LYING-IN HOSPITAL,
PHYSICIAN-ACCOCHEUR TO THE ST. MARY-LE-BONE INFIRMARY,
LECTURER ON MIDWIFERY AND THE DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN
AT ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.

Received April 9th.—Read May 28th, 1850.

THE *speculum matricis* is said by Ætius to have been invented in the days of the Emperor Domitian, but it must have been known to the Romans at an earlier period. In 1818 a bronze instrument, consisting of three branches, with two handles and a screw in the centre, was dug out of the Ruins of Pompeii, and has been preserved in the Museum at Naples, and of which there is a description and delineation in Vulpes's work entitled 'Illustrazione di Tutti gli Strumenti Chirurgici,' Napoli 1847, from which the accompanying figure has been taken.

This instrument is called, *Speculum magnum matricis*, and there can be no doubt that it was intended to dilate

the vagina and bring the os uteri into view. It is a complicated machine, but probably one of the most safe and perfect trivalve speculums that has since been invented.

Paulus Ægineta described an instrument which he called *διοπτρα*, composed of two branches and a screw handle, which was employed for the purpose of dilating the vagina. Avicenna is stated to have described, under the title *vertigo*, two sorts of specula with three branches, which were opened by means of a screw handle. Spachius has given four delineations of the uterine specula of Ambrose Paré, which had three branches, and were expanded by means of a screw. These instruments are figured and described in chapter xii, which is entitled 'De Verrucarum Cervicis Uteri Curatione.' The following passage contains an account of the diseases to which it was considered applicable: "Quæ in uteri cervice succrescant verrucæ, siquidem minime malignæ sint, filo constringendæ erunt aut exsecandæ. Quæ altius in utero delitescunt, speculo matricis immisso, oculis et digitis venient subjiciendæ." Spachius has likewise given a representation of the Vertigo of Albucasis; and it is probable that the instrument, being described along with others which were employed for the purpose of extracting the fœtus when dead, in difficult labours, that it was not used as a speculum uteri, but dilator of the vagina. That the speculum matricis of Joannes Ruffius, also figured by Spachius, was a midwifery instrument employed in difficult labours, is certain from the following passage at p. 179: "Apertorium inquam, unctum et compressum obstetrix leniter per collum matricis ad portam interiorem dirigat? quo sufficienter facto, utraque manu apertorium infra comprimat donec quantum sufficit os matricis diduxerit. Vel si placet altero instrumento speculo inquam matricis, eodem modo utatur, uti de apertorio modo dictu est. In hoc autem vertebam toties circumvolvi oportet donec sufficere propter dilatationem intellexeris. Eo autem modo diducto matricis orificio, obstetrix manibus infantem leniter apprehendat et si possibile est cum secundis educat."

M. Recamier, of Paris, states, that in 1801 he began to treat ulcers of the uterus and vagina with topical applications

like those of the throat. By means of a slender tin tube, five inches long, he applied to the ulcerated surfaces charpie steeped in *mel rosarum*, and certain vegetable syrups with or without the collyrium of Lanfranc, the laudanum of Rousseau, and the extract of opium. "I owed to these dressings," said M. Recamier, "the amelioration of all the ulcers of the uterus and vagina to which they were applied, the prolongation of the lives of several women afflicted with uterine and vaginal cancers, and finally the cure of divers obstinate ulcerations which were not cancerous."¹ How the application of such simple substances as honey of roses, and syrup of carrots, could have produced such striking effects, it is difficult to imagine.

In the year 1816 a case of cancer uteri occurred, which led M. Recamier to enlarge the diameter of his conical tube, that the morbid parts might be rendered more visible, and cauterization employed without compromising the surrounding structures. He called this tube the speculum uteri, which he says has now passed into general practice, to perfect the diagnosis of ulcers of the uterus and rectum, which is indispensable in all cases where dressings require to be applied to the os uteri, and where vesico-vaginal, and recto-vaginal fistulæ exist. At that time it was an opinion entertained by some French pathologists that cancer of the uterus is a local disease produced by, or in some way connected with, inflammation, and that the tissue of the uterus was almost always healthy two or three lines beyond the part affected; that there was an analogy between *noli me tangere* of the skin and cancerous ulceration of the uterus, and that this latter disease might be arrested by escharotics applied over the whole extent of the ulcerated surface. The unsoundness of these views was demonstrated by the result of the first case in which it was tried, the malignant disease having returned again and again; and at last, having proved fatal, though the fungoid tumour of the os uteri had been cut away by Baron Dupuytren in the first stage of the disease, and the

¹ Recherches sur le Traitement du Cancer. Par J. C. Recamier, M.D., tom. i, p. 317.—Paris, 1829.

entire os and cervix uteri, and a great part of the body of the uterus, had been destroyed, not by cancerous ulceration, but by twenty-seven cauterizations made with the acid nitrate of mercury.

From 1816 to 1829, M. Recamier employed escharotics in many cases of cancer uteri, by means of the speculum. In several of these, he said, the disease had never returned, but he admitted that in all, where the cervix was affected with cancer, the disease had never failed to reappear, and prove fatal whatever care was taken to carry the caustic beyond the diseased part. Although the total inefficacy of this treatment was soon satisfactorily proved, it continued nevertheless to be extensively employed in Paris; and not only were arsenical paste, nitrate of silver, acid, nitrate of mercury, potassa fusa, creosote, muriate of gold, and compression had recourse to, but even irons of a red and white heat were applied to the parts, which destroyed their vitality and made them slough; yet, incredible as it may appear, the sensations produced by the actual cautery were reported by the patients to have been rather pleasant than painful.

The cruel practice of extirpating with the knife the whole or portions of the cancerous, or rather supposed cancerous uterus, now began to prevail, and became, both in Paris and London, the source of great popularity to some individuals, and most flattering reports of the results were published. In the Memoir on 'Amputation of the Neck of the Uterus,' presented by Mons. Lisfranc to the Institute of France in 1834, the author stated, that of 99 operations for cancer of the uterus, 84 had been successful. The statements made in this Memoir are now universally disbelieved, and no man possessed of sound pathological knowledge would, at the present time, propose to extirpate the whole or any portion of a cancerous uterus. In the hands of M. Recamier and M. Lisfranc the speculum led only to useless cauterizations and operations.

The instrument soon assumed a great variety of forms, and came to be extensively employed in the investigation of venereal diseases, in the prisons, hospitals, and dispensaries of

Paris. "Inflammation of the mucous membrane of the vagina and os and cervix uteri," "engorgements," "abrasions," "erosions," "superficial ulcerations," "syphilitic chancres," "fleshy pimples," "vegetations," "granulations in groups," "mucous tubercles," "crowds of red papillæ," "projecting spots of varying size," and numerous other morbid appearances, very vaguely defined, were reported to have been discovered by the aid of the speculum, which otherwise must have escaped detection.¹

The speculum then became an instrument of police, and the sanatory laws not only of Paris but of Berlin, Hamburgh, Munich, Stuttgart, and other continental cities, were regulated, to a great extent, by the information thus supposed to have been obtained. The prostitutes of the various districts of Paris were then, as now, compelled by the Police to assemble at stated periods in the mornings, at the hospitals and dispensaries appointed by the government, to be examined with the speculum. One by one in succession they took their places upon their backs, with their knees drawn up and separated, on a kind of bed or table, minutely described by M. Parent Duchatelet in his work on 'Prostitution in Paris;' had the speculum introduced into the vagina, and the parts publicly explored by the medical officers of the institution before students and strangers from foreign countries, some of whom took up the notion, that uterine pathology could only be learned by witnessing such exhibitions, and hurried home to announce to their unenlightened professional brethren, that they were the "apostles of the speculum"—that "their fate was linked to the speculum"—and that "with the speculum they would stand or fall."² According to the observations made on these occasions, the women thus publicly exposed to shame were either permitted to return to their vicious habits without control, or be consigned to the wards of syphilitic hospitals, which M. Ricord says they

¹ *Mémoire sur quelques Faits observés à l'Hôpital des Vénériens.* Par M. T. Ricord, D.M.P.; *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Médecine*, tom. ii, p. 159, 1833.

² See Dr. Balbrinie's Thesis.—London, 1836.

looked upon as prisons, and to escape from which they practised every species of deceit. Some of the most eminent surgeons of France and Germany conducted these public examinations of prostitutes with the speculum, and endeavoured to perform the difficult task of separating the clean from the unclean.

In the communication which I have now the honour of presenting to the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, I propose to state concisely the results of my observations during the last twenty-three years, on the Use of the Speculum in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Uterine Diseases, believing that, at the present time, it is equally important to the medical profession and to society at large, that the *legitimate* use and *real* value of the speculum in practice should be accurately defined and made known.

In the first great class of organic uterine diseases, which comprehends fibrous, fibro-cystic, glandular, and all other tumours which are not malignant, I have derived little or no aid from the speculum in their diagnosis or treatment. When fibrous and other tumours are formed under the peritoneum, or between the muscular fibres, or under the lining membrane and distend the cavity, their existence can only be determined by a careful examination of the hypogastrium, and of the interior of the pelvis through the vagina and rectum. The uterus is usually felt large, hard, irregular, and the cervix shortened. Where these tumours have passed partially or completely through the os uteri, their size, density, the length and thickness of their roots, and the relations these bear to the os and cervix uteri, can only be determined by the touch. I have never detected a small polypus within the os uteri, or hanging through it, which I had failed to detect with the finger. In cases of this description I have, however, repeatedly employed the speculum to ascertain the colour of the polypus, and the degree of vascularity of the investing membrane, which without ocular examination could not have been determined. The knowledge thus acquired was of no use in the treatment. In a case of fibro-

cystic polypus of the uterus, which occurred at St. George's Hospital upwards of eight years ago, under the care of Mr. Cutler, the speculum was introduced, and we saw clearly the small cysts under the vascular covering membrane. The speculum was withdrawn, before the operation for the removal of the tumour had commenced. In a case of small glandular polypus in a sterile married lady, which I saw with Mr. Painter, the speculum was employed, and it made us acquainted with the colour, and more perfectly with the nature and diminutive size of the disease. The polypus was removed with the forceps, after the speculum had been withdrawn. In a similar case which I saw with Mr. Jonson, of Grosvenor Place, the speculum was employed for the same purpose after the nature of the disease had been satisfactorily ascertained by the touch. The tumour was readily removed with the forceps after the speculum had been withdrawn. Very recently I saw a sterile married lady, with Dr. Meryon, who had a small polypus hanging through the os uteri. In that case the speculum had been employed before the patient came to London, and for that reason alone I had recourse to it. The tumour presented the appearance of a large bean, was of a bright-red colour, like vascular tumours of the meatus urinarius, and bled freely when touched, though the surface was not ulcerated. The length and thickness of the root on which the speculum threw no light, had previously been ascertained with the finger. The forceps was passed through the tube, and the tumour removed; but it is now my conviction, that the peduncle would have been more effectually destroyed, had the forceps been passed up along the fore and middle fingers of the left hand in the usual manner. More recently, with Mr. Henry Charles Johnson, I removed a small polypus, hanging through the os uteri, with the forceps, in a most satisfactory manner, without the speculum altogether. In all large uterine polypi it is obvious that the speculum can be of no use, and that it would not enable us in any case to decide whether a tumour in the vagina was a polypus or an inverted uterus, a small portion only of the lining membrane of the uterus, in either case,

being all that could possibly be presented to the eye. A case of large globular tumour in the vagina, now under the care of Mr. Cathrow, strikingly illustrates the truth of what has now been stated respecting the use of the speculum in the diagnosis of inverted uterus, and fibrous tumours.

In all the varieties of malignant disease of the uterus, scirrhus, fungoid cancer, and corroding or phagedenic ulceration, the speculum has given me no assistance whatever in their diagnosis and treatment, either in the early or in the advanced stages. I have never, in a single instance, failed to determine by the sense of touch, when cancer of the uterus had commenced; but I have repeatedly, after the most careful examination, both with and without the speculum, suspected that it would be developed, when the result proved that my fears were groundless. I am fully satisfied that the speculum does not enable us to decide earlier than the finger that cancer has commenced; and if it did so, as some maintain, and enable us to make applications to the os uteri, which could not be made without, not the slightest advantage would be gained in practice. When cancer of the uterus has advanced to ulceration, the speculum is not only useless, but positively injurious, and ought not to be used. In the year 1827, when I first became acquainted with the speculum, and saw it very frequently employed in a great public institution, a patient with ulcerated carcinoma, speedily died from hemorrhage after the introduction of the bivalve speculum. In cases of ulcerated cancer of the uterus, the best French writers have interdicted its use. "L'état de la matrice elle-même," observes M. Teallier, "interdit quelquefois l'usage du spéculum; les ulcérations saignantes, et profondes du col, son énorme développement, les fongosités qui s'élèvent de sa surface empêchent et rendent même inutile ce moyen d'exploration." M. Pauly gives the same opinion, and relates a case in which the speculum produced extensive laceration of the vagina, and death in two hours.

Several cases of ulcerated carcinoma have come under my observations, in which the speculum and ignorance of uterine pathology appeared to have led to the commission of

the most grievous mistakes. In one of these, even in the last stage, the speculum and caustic had been employed almost daily for months, and hopes held out of recovery, when the patient had only a very short time to live. In another case which I saw with Mr. York, where the os and cervix uteri, and a portion of the vagina, were all extensively disorganized by cancerous ulceration, the speculum and caustic were used, at first daily, and then twice a week for months, by the physician under whose care she came at last, without the slightest benefit. I have seen other cases analogous to these, and several others have been related to me which I had not seen.

From the age, of maturity to the middle period of life, the uterus is rarely, seldom at least, comparatively with advanced age, affected with organic disease of any kind. Amenorrhœa, hysteria, dysmenorrhœa, menorrhagia, leucorrhœa, and various nervous affections local and constitutional, are those from which females chiefly suffer before the age of twenty-five or thirty. An examination of the physical condition of the uterus in unmarried women, either with or without the speculum, I have always refused to make, even when requested to do so, unless pain severe and almost constant in the region of the uterus existed, leucorrhœa or hemorrhage, which did not yield to treatment, and where the symptoms did not make me strongly suspect the presence of some displacement or organic disease. In unmarried women, whatever their rank or condition in life may be, the integrity of their structures should not be destroyed with the speculum, nor their modesty wounded by an examination of any kind without a necessity for such a proceeding being clearly shown. Even in married women, who are barren, or who have had children, it is unjustifiable on the grounds of propriety and morality, to institute an examination of any sort, unless the symptoms warrant the supposition, that the uterus is displaced, or is in a morbid condition, the nature of which cannot be determined by the symptoms alone. Numerous cases of leucorrhœa in young unmarried females where

rational constitutional and local treatment is adopted, perfectly recover, where no examination is made.

In cases of obstinate leucorrhœa, I have often employed the speculum in married women after I had failed to detect the existence of disease by the ordinary mode of examination. In some of these cases, there has been seen an unusual degree of redness of the os uteri, sometimes affecting the whole, and at other times limited to the inner margin, with or without swelling. The white viscid discharge has been seen issuing from the os uteri. I have never seen ulceration of the orifice of the uterus in such a case, and the condition of the interior of the cervix I have never been able to demonstrate, either with the bivalve or any other speculum; nor do I believe that, in the ordinary condition of the os uteri, it is possible to see the inner surface of the cervix to any great extent by any means. Where the orifice is unusually open, the lips may be separated sometimes to a small extent; but never, as far as my observation goes, to show more than an extremely small part of the interior of the cervix. In some cases of chronic leucorrhœa, with redness and swelling of the os uteri, I have known the speculum and caustic employed at short intervals for many months without the slightest benefit, but the leucorrhœa has ceased, as the general health has been restored by constitutional and topical treatment. In a case of sterility with obstinate leucorrhœa, which has very recently occurred, the injection into the cavity of the uterus of a weak solution of sulphate of zinc, caused the most sudden and excruciating pain, and collapse of the nervous system, which had nearly proved fatal.

Sometimes one or both lips of the os uteri are in the condition which is usually called hypertrophy, and which has no relation to cancer. One lip perfectly smooth, and not unusually hard or irregular, as in cancer, protrudes beyond the other to the extent of half an inch, or three quarters, or more. I have known this state mistaken for polypus, seized with the forceps, dragged down to the orifice of the vagina, and removed with the knife or scissors. At other times both the lips are swollen, nodulated and fissured, and the mucous

membrane covering them intensely red, with an appearance of superficial excoriations or granulations, which are elevated above the surrounding surface. These apparent granulations are usually considered and treated as ulcers of the os and cervix uteri, but they do not present the appearances which ulcers present on the surface of the body, or in the mucous membranes lining the viscera, and they are not identical with the granulations which fill up healthy ulcers. They present the appearances often observed on the tonsils, and which are said to be ulcers, but which are not. This granular state of the os uteri, in which the diseased mucous membrane is raised above the level of the surrounding surface, and not depressed like ulcerations in all other parts of the body, is not dissimilar to granular disease of the mucous membrane of the eyelids, the most aggravated cases of which are well known to be produced by the abuse of escharotic applications. These morbid states of the os uteri most frequently indicate the existence of some disease of the nabothian glands, pinniform rugæ, lining membrane or walls of the uterus, or of the general health, which lies far beyond the reach of the speculum and caustic. The state of the orifice of the urethra not unfrequently indicates the existence of disease of the prostate gland, or of the urethra itself near the bladder. Such is the case with the os uteri, and its red swollen hypertrophied, granular state, often indicates morbid conditions of the constitution, of the glands, mucous membrane, and walls of the uterus, on the nature, diagnosis, and treatment of which, little or no information is derived from the use of the speculum. In these cases, I have known leeches, scarifications, caustic, and the speculum employed upon a great scale, and sometimes I admit (if the reports of patients are always to be trusted to), with apparent temporary relief. Gently rubbing the os uteri with lunar caustic through the speculum, a few times at long intervals has appeared to effect all the good which such local treatment can accomplish. It is impossible that any disease of the os uteri, or any other part of the body, can require twice or thrice a week for six or nine months, the alternate applications of leeches and caustic through the speculum, in the

manner which has recently been recommended and practised; and it is my conviction, that rational constitutional treatment and injections, sedative and astringent, will in these morbid conditions of the os uteri succeed ultimately in producing more successful results than escharotics.

In some of these cases, instead of adopting the course which I have now recommended, for the removal of these diseased states of the uterus, potassa fusa has been applied to the os and cervix uteri, a piece of potassa fusa has been run into the cervix and twisted about in all directions, which has produced sloughing and complete disorganization of the parts. In one case, which I saw in a young married lady, this had been done repeatedly, and the patient had nearly perished from peritonitis and the sloughing which followed. I saw this lady some months after, with her general health deeply injured, the lips of the os uteri partially gone, and the parts cicatrized and contracted. I sought in vain for an explanation of the grounds of such practice, and recommended greater caution in the use of potassa fusa; but the advice was thrown away. Twice since the same experiment has been repeated by the same individual, and with the same results. One of the most learned Fellows of this Society has communicated to me the history of a case which came under his observation, in which sloughing followed the application of potassa fusa to the os uteri. The cervix uteri presented the appearance of a hard, pale, shining cicatrix. A narrow chink only was to be seen, into which a small bougie could not enter. The orifice was greatly contracted, if not absolutely closed. The eminent pathologist who has communicated to me the history of this case has justly observed, "That if potassa fusa be introduced into the os and cervix uteri, and turned firmly round, or be applied severely, as has lately been recommended, there must be a partial death and destruction of the part, and a state of actual mortification or gangrene induced; and this injury nature can only repair by sloughing, ulceration, cicatrization, and contraction, if not a complete closure of the cervix uteri."

An English physician, eminent in science, after visiting an hospital in Paris, a few days ago, wrote as follows to a

friend in London :—" I have seen some very wonderful things which I will recount to you ; a large speculum being passed up to the neck of the uterus, red hot irons are inserted into the neck, right into the os, which is also cauterized on its surface, and as soon as it is done the creatures get up and walk away, and never seem to feel it at all. To-day M. ——— found an os wider open than it should be, and so to satisfy his curiosity, he poked an immense long pair of forceps almost three inches into the cavity of the uterus : yet more, some days ago, I saw him pass his stick of lunar caustic into the os, a little way into the neck, then break it off and leave it there." If such practices as these, here described, were only employed in Paris, from whence all the pretended recent improvements in uterine pathology and therapeutics have issued, I should not now have considered it necessary to denounce them to the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society.

In the year 1832 my colleagues at the St. Marylebone Infirmary, Dr. Hope, Dr. Sims, Mr. Stafford, and Mr. Perry, late secretary to this society, at my request, desired that the uteri of all the women who died in the wards, should be carefully examined, and that they should be preserved for my inspection when any morbid appearance was observed. " From 1017 post-mortem examinations of females, of all ages, made by Dr. Boyd (after excluding those of children and others, in which special mention is not made of the uterus), there were found 708 where either the state or weight of the uterus was noted. In 13 of these there was congestion or inflammation, which had no specific character, and in some the inflammation was limited to the fundus, and could not have been detected, unless the uterus had been removed or cut open. In at least 3 there was enlargement and induration, which did not appear to have any specific character, and in 2 there was extreme wasting ; 24 were puerperal cases ; 13 dropsy of the ovaries or Fallopian tubes ; in 31 fibrous or bony tumours ; and in 21 cancer." " My impression is," adds Dr. Boyd, in the same report, " that ulceration of the neck or the mouth of the womb is an exceedingly rare disease, else I must have observed it,

having cut up and weighed many hundreds, it could have scarcely escaped my notice."

Dr. Allen, the present resident medical officer at the St. Marylebone Infirmary, has held the office about twelve years, and he states to me, that he has actually examined or been present at the examination of the bodies of more than 1000 adult females, and "of these he does not believe, that he ever saw more than 20 examples of ulceration of the os uteri of any kind, scrofulous or venereal, excluding cases of ulcerated cancer of the uterus, which were known to exist before death." Dr. Allen further states, that he has "observed in some cases, a portion of the mucous membrane of one lip slightly abraded, this he has seen occasionally, but not often."

Mr. Prescott Hewett (a great part of whose professional education was received in Paris, and who, for some years, followed the practice of the several professors who were in the habit of exhibiting to their pupils all the appearances which the os uteri presented, through the speculum,) was six years Curator of the Museum of St. George's Hospital, and conducted all the post-mortem examinations. He states that during that time he could not have examined fewer than 600 uteri, "and very seldom, if ever, did he meet with anything which could be called ulceration of the os and cervix uteri, independent of scrofula and cancer."

Mr. George Pollock held the same office for three years, during which time he examined the bodies of more than 300 women, and in every case the uterus was cut open and examined. In 4 uteri ulceration was observed, but 3 of these were scrofulous patients, and scrofulous ulceration existed in other organs. In the 4th case the ulceration must have been cancerous, as it involved the vagina extensively as well as the os uteri. Mr. Hewett and Mr. Pollock did not therefore observe a single example of simple ulceration of the os and cervix in the 900 uteri they examined, which confirms the accuracy of the opinion given by Dr. Boyd, that "ulceration of the neck or mouth of the womb is a very rare disease."

Mr. Gray succeeded Mr. Pollock at St. George's Hospital, and he examined 180 uteri. Distinct ulceration of the os

and cervix was only observed by him in three uteri, and the nature of the ulceration in those three cases was not determined with certainty. Mr. Gray states to me further, that redness, slight abrasions, and granulations were sometimes, but not frequently, observed.

Neither in the living nor in the dead body have I ever seen ulceration of the os and cervix uteri except of a SPECIFIC character, and especially scrofulous and cancerous; but I have met with a very considerable number of cases, in which it had been affirmed by others to exist during life after deliberate and repeated examination by them with the speculum, where I ascertained, that ulceration did not exist in the os and cervix uteri, nor disease of any kind. This mistake has happened not once, and to one individual, but in a number of cases, and to several practitioners who avow that they are "in the daily and almost hourly use of the speculum."

Two years ago, I saw a young unmarried lady suffering from hysteria. She had been examined with the speculum by a practitioner previously in attendance, and was declared to have an engorgement of the uterus and ulceration of the cervix. The speculum and caustic, twice a week for several months, were required, it was said, to complete the cure. At the request of the ordinary medical attendant of the family, I examined the os uteri both with and without the speculum, and he did the same most carefully, but no trace of ulceration or disease of any kind could be detected in the parts. We recommended that the patient should leave her couch, to which she had been doomed, and by the use of valerian, and other appropriate remedies, with exercise and sea-air, she speedily and most completely recovered without the speculum and caustic.

On the 3d October, 1849, I was consulted by a lady, aged 20, who had enjoyed good health before her marriage. Soon after this, pregnancy took place; and for ten weeks, according to her own report, she was extremely ill, had constant sickness, pain in the region of the uterus, and in the legs; swimming in the head, inability to walk,—the whole nervous system was greatly disordered. Miscarriage took place in May 1848, about the tenth week, with much hemorrhage.

I was requested by the patient's mother to examine the uterus, and to state whether it was in a sound or diseased condition. I did so by the touch, and ascertained that it was small, moveable, and neither displaced nor diseased, but very tender on pressure about the cervix. I was then requested to examine carefully with the speculum, and state whether or not ulceration existed in the mouth and neck of the womb, and whether one of the ovaria was not diseased. I did so, but could see nothing like an ulcer in these parts. I was then informed, that she had been examined by another physician with the speculum the day before, and that he had declared, in the most positive manner, that ulceration existed, which would render it necessary for the patient to remain several months in London to have caustic frequently applied. I recommended her to return home immediately, to avoid the speculum and caustic, and trust her recovery to sea-air, carriage exercise, sedatives, and mild tonics. For some months the pains in the uterine region, and inability to walk continued; but in the progress of time all the symptoms wholly disappeared, without any other treatment being adopted; pregnancy again took place, she went to the full period, was safely delivered, suckled her child, and is now in the enjoyment of excellent health.

On the 22d February, 1850, at the request of Dr. Page, Physician to St. George's Hospital, I saw a married lady, aged 32, who had suffered severely from hysteria, both before and after her marriage. She was the mother of several healthy children, the youngest being two years of age. The general health was good, the catamenia were regular, there was no leucorrhœa nor sign of uterine disease. This lady was, however, made to believe by a friend, who had herself been treated with the speculum and caustic during some months, that there was something wrong about her womb, and that she must, therefore, consult the practitioner referred to in the last case. The lady did so, and was immediately informed that she was labouring under inflammation and ulceration of the cervix, and that it would be necessary to come to London for six months, at least, be confined to her couch, and have caustic frequently applied through the

speculum. I examined the os and cervix uteri of this patient, both with the finger and the eye, but I could discover no trace of inflammation, ulceration, excoriation, granulation, or disease of any kind whatever. Never in the whole course of my experience had I seen and felt the os and cervix uteri in a more healthy condition.

I will not fatigue the Society by relating the histories of many additional cases, which have come under my observation, in which it had been previously affirmed, after deliberate examination with the speculum, that ulceration of the os and cervix uteri existed, where there was actually no ulceration nor disease of any kind.

Dr. Copland has communicated to me the following history of a remarkable case, in which the speculum was used, in my opinion, contrary to every scientific principle, and with fatal effects:—"A lady, aged 50," says Dr. Copland, "had been several years afflicted with jaundice, and in the latter period of those years became paraplegic. The paraplegia was, to a certain extent, removed, so that she was able to drive out in her carriage. She had consulted several physicians before she came to me, and I had seen her repeatedly during the last few years. She had heard that a physician had cured the wife of a distinguished person of some very serious disease of the womb. When this was related to her, and that it was done in consequence of his employing a new method of examination, and that, by having recourse to this, he had not only cured the lady referred to, but was also better able than any other physician in London to find out the source of all diseases occurring in females, she went and consulted him, and at the same time informed him that she was under my care. This lady begged me to meet this practitioner in consultation, which I did, when he informed me what this new method of examination was. He stated, that from the previous conversation he had had with the patient, he believed that all her illness arose from disease of the uterus, and he wished to demonstrate this with the speculum. To this I answered, that there could be no disease

of the uterus or its appendages, because the uterine functions had been performed regularly up to the age of 49 years, and that she had never complained of leucorrhœa, or of any uneasiness about the uterus. However, he succeeded in recommending, with the concurrence of this lady's married sister, who had accompanied her from the country, that an examination with the speculum should be made. I said it appeared to me wholly unnecessary, but I would leave the patient to her own discretion. The examination was commenced, and I remained some time, but was shocked with the proceedings, for the hymen was unbroken, and the doors were all obliged to be closed to prevent the people in the house from hearing her screams and being alarmed. The examination went on, and after having stopped the greater part of an hour, during which it continued and was not completed, I left. About seven or eight days after this, I was informed, that the paraplegic symptoms, which had previously been much mitigated, had become exasperated, and had extended so as to produce general palsy, and ultimately delirium and coma. She died in eight days after the examination with the speculum, and I requested an examination of the body to be made. This was done in the presence of Dr. King, two surgeons from Woolwich, and myself. The operator with the speculum was also requested to attend, but he did not appear. The spine was opened, and as high as the first and second dorsal vertebra lymph was effused between the membranes, but it was not recent, and was partially converted into a gelatinous adipose substance. But above this, and up as high as the base of the brain, there were indications of recent inflammation, with a copious effusion of coagulated lymph observed. The uterus and all its appendages were perfectly healthy, the os cervix and every part of the uterus was in a sound state, and the vagina also was perfectly healthy except at its orifice, which presented appearances of recent violence. The hymen was completely torn."

These are all the observations which I shall now offer, on the use of the speculum in the diagnosis and treatment of uterine diseases.