

THE SPECULUM—ITS ABUSES AND ITS USES.

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In the discussion of the subject assigned to me, my object will be fully attained if I awaken an interest in a department of practical medicine, until recently comparatively ignored by the larger part of the profession, and too often viewed through the medium of prejudice or passion. Full half a century has elapsed since the leading minds of England and France, now sharply awakened to the inefficiency of the routine practice pursued in the treatment of the diseases of women, and new modes of investigation were advocated or condemned by the opposing schools which immediately sprang into existence in those respective countries. In this country the awakening power was confined, until the last few years, to a few specialists and a small number of quacks, who were too often confounded together, not only in the minds of the people, but in a large majority of the profession.

The history of the speculum is intimately associated, and almost identical with that of gynæcology. For a long time it was supposed, and the opinion is still held, that the instrument is an invention of these latter days, and that when Recamier, in 1801, began to treat ulcers of the uterus and vagina with topical applications by means of a "slender tin tube," the "speculum uteri" was born.

More careful examination of the earlier records of our science exploded this error; and now almost every work on gynæcology is prefaced by a long dissertation on this subject, replete with learned quotations from Hippocrates, Celsus, Arctæus, Galen, Aetius and Paulus Aeyna, to say nothing of Avicenna Serapion, Haly Abbas, and Albucasis, whose writings the authors are unable to read.

Without painfully rehashing this borrowed learning, I will content myself with the original researches of Dr. Wright, in gleaning the little I care to say upon the purely historical part of my subject.

It appears then that, contrary to the opinions once held by even such men as Simpson, the speculum was well known and in constant use by the earliest practitioners of medicine—Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, from long before the time of Hippocrates to the destruction of the Alexandrian library and the subsequent dispersion of the Alexandrian Schools. It appears that it gradually fell into disuse, and was for a time virtually lost to the profession, probably because when the Moslems held sway, and the Arabian schools arose, the tenets of the Mohammedan creed prevented the personal examination of females, except by one of their own sex, and consequently the "diseases of women" in the Arabian writing soon became a barren subject, the science being generally copied from the Greek books, and the art being left entirely in the hands of midwives.

At the time of the revival of letters, about the year 1400, the works of the Greeks, and a little later of the Romans, began to be again translated, studied and annotated, and again the speculum came into notice, and from that time allusions to its use became more distinct and frequent. Indeed, a careful examination of medical literature renders it doubtful if the history of any single instrument has been so well preserved. With the increased knowledge of the writing of the ancient authorities, came also gradually increased independence of thought and original observation, until in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a number of books, more or less original, were published, treating exclusively of diseases of women. In England one of the earliest of these writers, and a representative one, inasmuch as even then he treated of these subjects from the standpoint which has ever since characterized the teachings of the English, as distinct from the French school, was Jacobus Primerose. It is worthy of notice that, though considering these diseases largely in their relations to other diseases and other organs, and the influence exerted by the proper treatment, "he mentioned the use of the speculum as a matter of course whenever the condition of the cervix uteri has to be investigated."

It was left for a later day to endeavor to divorce from the treatment of uterine diseases the instrument which more than any other single one has in its various forms contributed to their accurate diagnosis and comprehension.

When Recamier finally enlarged his speculum in 1816, and formally introduced it to the world as a new and hitherto unknown mode of investigation, he found both partisans and opponents in France and England, though the latter country has, in the main, held to the great importance of constitutional treatment, regarding uterine disease as a fragment of a constitutional malady. While with the French school the local ailment is almost exclusively regarded, the constitutional treatment being attributed to the wide-spread influence exercised by the demonstrated uterine disease. The French school has not lacked gallant and zealous exponents among English practitioners, particularly among those who first introduced there the methods of local investigation and treatment. Nor, on the other hand, have the English doctrines failed to find an appreciative hearing among some of the worthiest representatives of French gynecology. The English probably enjoy the exclusive credit of having furnished distinguished practitioners like Lee, who could go to the extreme of declaring that "the speculum emanated from the syphilitic wards of the hospitals of Paris; and it would have been better for the women of England had its use been confined to those institutions." This extreme opinion was doubtless held a few years ago by many, who shared alike with Dr. Lee his bitter animosity, and his mistaken historical opinions. Dr. Lee published his work on the "Employment of the Speculum in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Uterine Diseases, with three hundred cases," in 1858, having previously publish-

ed a part of it in the Medico Chirurgical Transactions for '50. How much he may have subsequently modified his opinions I have no means of knowing, but that some who thought with him met with a radical change of heart, we have an amusing evidence in the later writings of one of the earlier English advocates of the use of the speculum. Dr. Acton ("A Practical Treatise on Diseases of the Urinary and Generative Organs in both Sexes," 3d ed. pp. 215, 216) says: "Formerly, when an instrumental examination was suggested, few surgeons would condescend even to reason on the matter. Others declined on the plea of not wishing to propose anything which could shock the delicacy of an English female, and the patients hearing their statements, often declined further consultation with a surgeon who was said to propose a plan of treatment not only indelicate, but perfectly unnecessary.

"Another six months of useless lotions and drugs, unattended with the slightest relief, caused patients, however, to think that prejudice might have something to do with the decrying of this practice. Many ventured the experiment and found that the instrument of examination was not such a painful process as had been stated, and that it was by no means so unnecessary, inasmuch as in a few weeks they found themselves restored to a state of health they had not enjoyed for many years. As the number of cases of this sort increased it was impossible any longer to meet with contempt."

The later opponents of the speculum acknowledge having themselves occasionally employed it, but object to its indiscriminate use. Their hostility not unfrequently took the form of ridicule, as for instance, in such stories as the following: "A west-end speculum doctor (as he is called) examined one morning a mother, her eight daughters and a cook, and pronounced them all to labor under inflammation, and accordingly cauterized the whole family, *secundum artem*." (*Medical Times*, vol. xx., p. 459.) Nothing, however, shows more forcibly the strength of the feeling excited against the introduction of the speculum into England than a discussion at the Royal Medico Chirurgical Society, following a paper read by Dr. Lee. "The general tenor of Dr. Lee's paper is to show that the employment of the speculum, if it is not completely useless, was at least pernicious in a diagnostic point of view. And he went so far as to deny the existence of ulceration of the os uteri, the result of simple inflammation, and called in question the good faith of those who had advanced the opposite doctrine, as may be proved by reference to the paper. He says: 'Neither in the living or 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 that it did exist during life, after deliberate and repeated examination by them with the speculum, when I ascertained that ulceration did not exist in the os and cervix uteri, nor disease of any kind.'"

Dr. Ashwell boldly stated that these lesions, independent of cancer, were only to be observed in twenty-four out of one thousand cases.

"These assertions (we cannot call them arguments,) were peremptorily refuted by the head of the obstetric department, Dr. Læwk, who reduced to nothing Dr. Ashwell's eloquent tirade upon the delicacy of English women, and asserted that these uterine lesions which render an instrumental examination necessary were very common.

"The frequency of these lesions was, moreover, forcibly maintained by Prof. Murphy, not to mention Dr. Bennett and myself, who again asserted what we had previously published.

"I shall not further remark on this discussion, which was continued out of doors in a number of curious letters to be found in the *Lancet* of 1852, otherwise than to state that the speculum is now, 1860, generally employed in the diagnosis of uterine diseases, so generally, indeed, that its original supporters think that it is not unfrequently injudiciously and unnecessarily used by the very persons who were at first most vehement against it."

Some of the passages in the above quotations remind us forcibly of the following from Wright, who, in speaking of the history of uterine pathology in ancient times, says: (Uterine disorders, their constitutional influence and treatment, page 6,)—"But there gradually arose at Rome an independent school. Celsus, its most distinguished writer, was an exception to the general rule, as he had neither studied at nor did he love the Greek schools. Unfortunately, his most important chapter on uterine maladies is, in great part, lost, but we may judge from a passage in his works that even in his time diseases of the genital organs were so far a specialty of the Greek school that he could make it a subject of covert sarcasm."

In treating of them he says: "Their nomenclature among the Greeks is not only tolerable, but now fully sanctioned by practice, for they are freely employed in almost every volume, work, or treatise of the physicians; but with us Romans these terms are filthy, and never employed by any one who has a proper regard for modesty in language; therefore it is evident that there is no small difficulty in maintaining, at the same time, a delicacy of expression whilst delivering the precepts of the art."

"Whether it was jealousy or a continuance of that same bitter feeling toward the Grecian school of medicine previously simplified by Cato and Pliny, it is evident that some other than the alleged motive prompted Celsus to write this sentence, for, being a shrewd practitioner, he must have known that the morality of the Romans, as described in the sixth satire of Juvenal, scarcely required such tender solicitude."

Thus we see that in respect to the speculum and treatment of uterine diseases the old adage of "many men, many minds," applies quite as forcibly as to any other object of human thought or interests, and whatsoever may be the arguments advanced in the vindication of the posi-

tion taken, the true reason lies very commonly in the bump of contrariety; if it has no more contemptible source, universal in human nature, whether Roman, English or American, and manifesting itself generally as in this manner, so happily hit off by Dr. Gregory, as quoted by Dr. Simpson: "Within my memory," writes Dr. Gregory (*Diseases of Women*, page 156) "a new mode of cutting off legs was introduced (or and old one revived, I am uncertain which) and strongly recommended by an eminent surgeon, Mr. Alanson, it was called the flap operation, or cutting with flaps. I remember to have heard some disputes about it, for as there were flappers, of course there must have been anti-flappers, and as the dispute began little more than twenty-years ago, and is far from being ended as yet, it can scarcely have arrived at full maturity and violence.

Mr. Benjamin Bell must be either a flapper or an anti flapper, and I humbly conjecture (for I do not know the fact), that if he is a flapper, Mr. Jno. Bell will be a determined anti-flapper, but that if Mr. Benjamin Bell is an anti-flapper, John will be a most strenuous flapper. But flap or no flap, he certainly may take his choice of several ways of cutting off a leg."

I have quoted the opinions of Dr. Lee for two reasons. First. I propose to take his book as the basis of my remarks on the use and abuse of the speculum; and secondly. I think the stand taken by him and a few like him has had much to do with what I conceive to be the fact, that in this country, as I formerly remarked, the study of gynæcology has, until quite recently, been confined to a few specialists and quacks, whom the general profession has been too apt to confound, and that with an equal degree of respect, or rather lack of it. "Dr. Ashwell's eloquent tirade upon the delicacy of English women may have been as baseless as the similar wail of Celsus; but when backed by the same kind of fustian from Dr. Lee and others, while it did not prevent English practitioners like Bennett and Acton, who had a French education, from manfully following the light of the truth as they saw it, and gradually building up an increasing influential school of gynæcologists, it had, I think, a powerful repressive effect on the principal mind of the American profession.

Certain it is, that when I commenced the practice of medicine more than twenty years ago with the speculum and uterine sound as essential elements of my outfit, as was the stethoscope and catheter, there were but few young physicians of my acquaintance with whom I found myself in sympathy, and I may say none of the older ones outside of the teachers. The invention of Sims' speculum, and his astonishing success in vesicovaginal fistula, due more to the assistance of his speculum than to the use of his boasted silver-suture, finally did for the American physician what Recamier's speculum had done for a previous generation of French and English, and brought into immediate existence a swarm of newly-fledged gynæcologists as numerous as the locusts of Egypt, and quite as greivous to bear.

A word then on the uses and the abuses of the instrument would seem to be not only appropriate, but even necessary. The necessity of a re-consideration of the subject is all the greater, because the advance of gynecology has rendered many of the former objections entirely inapplicable.

Lee prefaces his account of his experience with the remark that it is "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." He closes his list of three hundred cases with the remark already quoted, that "the speculum emanated from the syphilitic wards of the hospitals of Paris, and it would have been better for the honor of England had its use been confined to those institutions." The last remark is a virtual denial that the speculum has any legitimate use or real value, beyond what it may possess as a hygienic instrument, by means of which officers of health may attempt what he elsewhere characterizes as "the difficult task of separating the clean from the unclean." Let us examine some of the general statements he makes before detailing his three hundred cases, and see what light they throw on the mental processes by which he and his present followers have arrived at the opinions they hold. He says: "In the first great class of organic diseases, which comprehend fibrocystic, glandular, and all other tumors which are not malignant, I have derived little or no aid from the speculum in the diagnosis or treatment." To this proposition there can be no objection; these cases all gynecologists agree are to be distinguished by the various modes of digital examinations of the hypogastrium, and of the interior of the pelvis through the vagina and rectum. He might have added to his list hematoma, pelvic cellulitis, and pelvic abscess. But, while admitting the truth of his proposition in its general sense, I am constrained to say that the speculum has incidentally a great value, even in many of these cases. I say incidentally, because it is as an assistant to the uterine, sound or probe that the speculum becomes in some of these cases an instrument of great value.

I cannot do better in proof and illustration of my position than quote from the exceedingly clear, methodical, and dispassionate work of Dr. Thomas. He says:

"The facts which may be ascertained by the probe are these:

"1st. The capacity of the uterus.

"2nd. The existence of growths within it.

"3rd. Directions of the course of its canal.

"4th. Differentiation of these four uterine tumors.

"5th. The existence of endometritis.

"The great importance of these facts with respect to diagnosis is evident, and one would suppose that an instrument revealing so much would be universally employed. Such, however, is by no means the case. By adepts it is commonly resorted to, but in general practice will

be found many, indeed a majority, who do not employ it, from fear of its results, the difficulty of its introduction, and uncertainty as to its revelations. It is my opinion that no case of uterine disease should be regarded as fully investigated, unless the cavity of the uterus be probed. Of course, there are in some cases contra-indications to such a procedure; but where none exists, it should be considered as essential to a thorough examination."

I cordially agree with Dr. Thomas in his endorsement of the probe. Now, let us see the manner of its use. We again quote:

"*Method of probing the uterus.*—While the woman lies on her back, the examiner, by vaginal touch, carefully ascertains the position of the uterus, by passing his finger first into the fornix vaginam, over its posterior face, and then along the base of the bladder over its anterior wall. This gives him a definite idea of the direction of the canal along which he is to pass his probe; and without it he should never essay the procedure. The speculum is then introduced, the patient preserving the usual decubitus, if a cylindrical instrument be employed—and turned on the left side if Sims' or one of its varieties be used. The examiner then takes the probe, and with his fingers gives it the exact curve, which he supposes the uterine canal to have, and gently passes it in.

"Should he fail, he alters the curve slightly, and makes another attempt until he succeeds, which will be very soon, if he has used this method so often as to have given himself experience," etc. Again: "Thus employed the uterine probe becomes a means of verifying a diagnosis, which has been made by touch, and is earnestly safe, easy of introduction and painless. It may be employed in all cases, except pregnancy, doing no injury even in metritis, so gentle is its entrance into the inflamed cavity."

It is very evident that the use of the probe with the delicacy here described, the only way in which it can be used to advantage, is impossible except with the assistance of the speculum. Lee further says: "I have never detected a small polypus within the os uteri or hanging through it, which I had failed to detect with the finger." Truly Hewett, in enumerating the cases in which the speculum is of service for the purpose of diagnosis, speaks of using it in cases of monorrhagia or recurring hemorrhage for the purpose of ascertaining the presence or absence of small polypoid growths within the os uteri, and which may be so small as not to be detected by digital examination. Lee's second objection is thus stated: "In all varieties of malignant disease of the uterus, scirrhus, fungoid, cancer, and corroding or phagadenic ulceration, the speculum has given me no assistance whatever in their diagnosis and treatment, either in the earlier or advanced stages." While the general assertion remains true, that cancerous affections are not much benefitted by the use of the speculum, there are cases in which it is of great service. I had laid aside, but cannot now find, a case in proof of this posi-

tion, detailed by Dr. Jacobi, of New York city, a case as remarkable for the promptness and decision manifest in the diagnosis and treatment as any I call to mind. The patient had applied to the lying-in department of the hospital, with which the doctor is connected, and had been immediately examined by the house surgeon with the speculum, as appears to be the invariable custom of the institution. The house physician, finding an appearance in the os which attracted his notice, called Dr. Jacobi's attention to it. He diagnosed epitheloid cancer, and immediately forced delivery by artificial dilatation, the woman being in about the seventh month of pregnancy. As soon as she had recovered from the immediate effect of her confinement, he extirpated the diseased tissue with a wire loop, heated by the galvanic current. This case is doubtless as exceptional as the skill of the operator; but the convenience of the speculum carefully used in the application of antiseptic and styptic dressings to a cancerous os, or in facilitating the injection of acetic acid into the diseased mass, cannot be denied.

The third class of cases to which the doctor thinks the speculum is inapplicable is the unmarried, "unless pain, severe and almost constant, in the region of the uterus existed, leucorrhœa or hemorrhage which did not yield to treatment; and when the symptoms did make me strongly suspect the presence of some displacement or organic disease." A list of symptoms is here presented fruitful enough in cases to satisfy the desires of any reasonable gynecologist. I sympathize almost to tears with the chivalrous delicacy of Dr. Lee, and endorse the sentiment that: "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."

I grant that "numerous cases of leucorrhœa in young unmarried females, when rational, constitutional and local treatment is adopted, perfectly recover when no examinations are made." Hence I should esteem it my duty to give a fair trial under such circumstances to constitutional means and to simple injections. I agree with Dr. Lee, also that "even married women, who are barren, or who have had children, it is unjustifiable, on the grounds of propriety and mortality, to institute an examination of any sort, unless the symptoms warrant the supposition that the uterus is displaced, or is in a morbid state, the nature of which cannot be determined by the symptoms alone." But I cannot see in these assertions anything more than condemnation of "chambering and wantonness." Sins that the moral law is sufficiently explicit upon to render a medical essay on the subject superfluous; nor can I, if there is any truth in modern gynecology, as taught by Byford, Meigs, Thomas, Hewitt, Storer, Simpson, McClintock, Hodge, Scanzoni, Duncan, Bennett, Wright, Tilt and a host of others. I may say *all* who are sup-

posed to be the best informed on the subject. Now these last propositions limit very materially the use of the speculum.

As long as endo-cervicitis, endo-metritis, corporeal cervicitis, corporeal metritis, either acute or chronic, are phrases expressing diseased conditions, and not empty sounds, and as long as those affections represent nine-tenths of the diseases which women, married and unmarried, suffer from, whenever they have ailments which are peculiar to them as women, I know not how the speculum can be honestly avoided either as a principal or accessory instrument in diagnosis and treatment. Indeed, the use of the technical terms which I have just given suggest to mind the only honorable justification for such a work as Lee's. The work is but eleven years old, and yet it is written as if the whole value of the speculum was in the treatment of ulcers of the os uteri, and the existence of these being disproved, the existence of the speculum becomes a shame. He says: "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 methods 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 in such a case, and the condition of the interior of the cervix I have been unable 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. When the orifice is unusually open, the lips may be so parted sometimes to a small extent, but never, so far as my observation goes to show, more than an extremely small part of the interior of the cervix."

Poor Dr. Lee! he finds no comfort in the speculum; though "the unusual degree of redness of the os uteri," and the "white viscid discharge" have "been seen," he cannot "see the interior of the cervix with any speculum," and endo-cervicitis and endo-metritis of which these are the effects are not visible—he cannot see them. There is another difficulty, however, under which the Dr. evidently labors, and in this we heartily sympathize with him. He has evidently had a provokingly extensive experience with the pretenders of his day, as is evinced in the recital of some of his cases. He says: "In the year 1827, when I first became acquainted with the speculum and saw it was frequently employed in a great public institution, one patient with ulcerated carcinoma speedily died with hemorrhage after the introduction of the speculum."

Again: "Sometimes one of the lips of the os uteri is in the condition which is called hypertrophy, and which has no relation to cancer; one lip perfectly smooth, and not usually 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." Again: "On the twelfth day of February, 1850, at the request of Dr. Page, physician to St. George's Hospital, I saw a married lady aged thirty-two, who had suffered seriously from hysteria, both before and after marriage. She was the mother of several healthy children, the youngest being two years of age. The general health was good, the catamenia was regular; there was no leucorrhœa, or signs of uterine disease. This lady was, however, made to believe by a friend who had herself been treated by the speculum and caustics 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 laboring 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 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 have I seen and felt the os and cervix uteri in a more healthy state." It is very evident that when Recamier's discovery awoke the English and French mind on the subject of the speculum, hundreds made a business of it, who only knew how to introduce it. Strange it is however, that the multifarious manifestations of ignorance the doctor encountered should all be laid at the door of the innocent speculum. Surely never was an insensible bivalve worse treated. If any inventor of an instrument, or mode of investigation or operation, should be held responsible for the deeds of his imitators, what a fearful thing it would be to become one of the benefactors of mankind. Chapman used to tell of a man in Philadelphia, who perambulated the streets in the days of Lænnec, with the tube of a stethoscope sticking out of his coat-tail pocket, and of which he made ostentatious use, who could not have heard the roar of Niagara, if he had been under the sheet. I have read somewhere of an eminent German oculist who said he had spoiled a hat-full of eyes before he learned to extract the cataract.

It is useless to dwell longer on these general considerations. Dr. Lee enters on the detail of his three hundred cases, of which I have made a hasty and very imperfect analysis, and out of the three hundred I find all but ninety-five clearly proper cases for the use of the speculum, if Thomas and Hewitt, and those views they represent in their respective countries, are competent to decide. And of these ninety-five, if the speculum can be forgiven for assisting the sound where tumors are to be diagnosed, or the drop syringe is used, when the causes of barrenness are sought after, I doubt whether a dozen will fairly justify his abuse of the speculum. It may be asked then why I have chosen a writer, whose

essay is, in my judgement, so far behind the age, to combat? Why do I put up a man of straw if it is true that his objections have no weight? I answer because just such objections as those have influenced the generation just passing from the stage, and through them the great portion of the present generation, until the works of Thomas, Sims, Byford, &c., gave a new life to gynecology among us; and just such objections as these are the very ones that are or can be urged by those who have not joined the army of "uterine raiders." To state my opinion in the broadest terms, I should almost say of the speculum what Thomas says of the sound. No case of uterine disease should be regarded as fully investigated, until it has been used either as a principal or accessory instrument. Let us see what testimony in favor of the use of the speculum as a means to facilitate diagnosis and treatment we can introduce to strengthen our position.

James Y. Simpson, Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh, says (*Obstetric memoirs, etc.*, by Priestley and Storer, vol. I., page 44): "It is almost unnecessary to insist at the present day upon the importance of the early and accurate local examination of the uterus in all cases of suspicious vaginal discharge. In some instances examination by the finger may be sufficient, but in every doubtful case the speculum should likewise be resorted to if there is any affection of the vagina or cervix. It will be often found confirming, and not unfrequently also changing and rectifying the opinion which the more tactile examination had led the practitioner to adopt."

F. W. Von Scanzoni (Professor of Midwifery in the University of Wurzburg, and Councillor to the King of Bavaria, *Treatise on the Diseases of the Sexual Organs of Women*; translated by A. K. Gardrur) says, page 42: "The introduction of the speculum into the practical treatment of the diseases of females is an attainment of our day; it has inaugurated a great advance, not only in the diagnosis, but in the therapeutics of the diseases of the genital organs. In fact, without the aid of this instrument, the successful and rational treatment of a great number of these diseases, would be as impossible as those of the heart and lungs without auscultation and percussion. It is not uncommon for the practitioner who uses this instrument to discover morbid changes, of which at first he had not perhaps even suspected the existence, but which it was important for him to know, in order to treat his patient with success."

J. Marion Sims, late Surgeon to the Woman's Hospital, New York, (*Clinical Notes on Uterine Surgery*, page 6,) says: "Every thorough uterine investigation is naturally divided into two stages: the first requiring the touch, the second the sight."

Edward John Tilt, member of the Royal College of Physicians, &c., &c., (*Handbook of Uterine Therapeutics*, page 17 and 18, says: "The impossibility of working in the dark will appeal to the sense of the patient, and the assertion of inability to adopt further treatment without

more precise information, will impart the clear conviction of its being a duty to submit to accurate internal examination; and the higher the rank, and more virtuous the patient, the less trouble will be found in making her understand the urgency of submitting to so disagreeable a necessity."

James Henry Bennett, late Physician-Accoucher to the Western General Dispensary, &c., &c., "Practical Treatise on Inflammation of the Uterus," fourth edition, 1856, page 33, says: "The recent adoption, by some leading Continental practitioners, of careful instrumental examination in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the uterus, has opened an entirely new field to practice, and must lead to a complete transformation of uterine pathology, as it is now presented in the medical literature of this country."

Graily Hewitt, (Professor of Midwifery and Diseases of Women, University College, and Obstetric Physician to the Hospital, "The Diagnosis, Pathology, and Treatment of Diseases of Women," first American edition, 1868, p. 238,) says: "By the use of the instrument known as the 'speculum,' we are able to attain ocular evidence of the condition of that part of the uterus, which projects into the vagina, and of the orifice or os uteri."

The cases in which the speculum is most commonly used for purposes of diagnosis are the following: cases of obstinate leucorrhœa, in which there is reason to suspect the presence of an abnormal condition of the cervix uteri, and the glands there situated; cases of menorrhagia, or recurring hemorrhage; cases in which is considered advisable to examine ocularly the condition of the portia vaginalis and os uteri, and then of obtaining evidence as to the presence and nature of ulcerations, abrasions, excoriations, &c., of the parts in question. It is employed in cases in which it is considered advisable to explore the interior of the uterus itself, to facilitate in some cases the use of the uterine sound, and it is essential in the performance of some operations involving the cervix or os uteri.

What means then the clamor, it may be asked, which is being made in public addresses, medical journals, and by every leading gynæcologist if the speculum is applicable to so large a proportion of cases of uterine diseases?

I answer it means just this: the works I have mentioned, and particularly the brilliant labors of Sims, have awakened hundreds to the fact that the time has come when money, and patients, and laurels were to be won by the use of an instrument, which until now they had reviled. The few honest and able gynæcologists, and even the most ignorant of the quacks, had educated women up to an appreciation of the fact that their diseases were often peculiar to them as women, were to be learned by peculiar modes of investigation, and relieved by peculiar modes of treatment. So the harvest was ripe and there was no end of laborers.

Thousands who for years had no more respectful epithet than "specu-

lum doctor" for a few earnest laborers in the field, and no higher appreciation of their motives than that they "liked to examine the women," now found themselves thoroughly posted in the science and art of gynecology. What matters it if they cannot distinguish a case of retroflexion from a pelvic abscess, or a polypus from a cancer; they can introduce a speculum, and their patients are satisfied of their skill, "because they treat after this manner." Very many are pseudo-surgeons who think they can slit a uterus as well as Sims, and will continue to do so, for their reading will hardly reach to Sims' late editions wherein he repents of his former teachings. These are the army of "uterine raiders." They very naturally gave birth to an opposite party of "speculum raiders," who regard the uterus as a harmless, inoffensive little organ, stowed away in a quiet place, having no function to perform save at certain periods of life. Much abused by surgeons and "shored" up by instruments which, to them, look like the drawings of turbine water-wheels, or a leaf from a work on entomology.

Let every honest and conscientious gynecologist thank God for our great army of "speculum raiders." What a fearful aggravation of a calamity we all deplore would it have been if they too had joined the army of "uterine raiders."