

from the foregoing statement and opinions it would seem probable—that in the new physician the managers have obtained the advantage of a man of business,—a good director of the household affairs, an able classifier, a prompt, energetic, active superintendent of matters that he *does* understand! But in making this selection, perhaps they have overlooked one important qualification. It is the misfortune of our establishments for insane persons to be designated “ASYLUMS.” A workhouse is an *asylum*,—an almshouse is an *asylum*,—the great public institutions at Greenwich and Chelsea are *asylums*. Without doubt, a portion of every large building for the reception of lunatics is an asylum. But the word “ASYLUM,” when adopted for the general title of such establishments, is misused, and often with unfortunate effect. For, constantly calling those institutions “ASYLUMS,” at last it is forgotten that they are, or rather that they should be, HOSPITALS,—not almshouses, only, for the *cure* of lunatics, but hospitals for their *cure*—establishments for the treatment of insanity. To take care of the helpless is a good thing; to cure them of disease which is amenable to medical art, is a better. But too often, that “better part” is forgotten, and that which should be a hospital becomes a mere dwelling-house. So may it have happened at Edinburgh, that the directors, misled by a title, have chosen a steward possessing a physician's diploma. When the next annual report of the Scotch Asylum is published, a more than usual interest will attach to the “Table of Cures,” and much pleasure be felt on finding that the directors have elected a competent physician, instead of an amiable companion for the matron.

## ON THE GANGLIA AND NERVES OF THE UTERUS.

(REPLY OF MR. BECK.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is extremely painful to reply to personal attacks; but more painful to be obliged to intrude upon the profession with personal acts. Yet the unfounded charges and statements which Dr. Robert Lee makes in his late paper “On the Ganglia and Nerves of the Uterus,” published in your journal for November 21st, compel me to ask for space in your columns to reply to them.

Dr. Lee insinuates again, that I was instigated by Dr. Sharpey to undertake my investigations into the anatomy of the nerves of the uterus, through some unworthy motive or motives, which are left undefined. It might be considered that the denial I have already given to this insinuation would be sufficient; yet, as Dr. Lee has endeavoured to support it by a series of wrong statements, I am compelled to follow him through the principal of them.

Dr. Lee also says, “About the same time, (December, 1842,) Mr. T. Snow Beck, who, some years before, had been a pupil of Dr. Sharpey at University College, and had obtained an introduction to me, frequently called at my house, and I showed him all my dissections of the nerves of the uterus.” This passage, which is ambiguously worded, is evidently intended to convey the insinuation that I obtained, about December, 1842, an introduction to Dr. Lee, as the commencement of a series of unworthy acts. How far this is correct will appear from the following statement:—

In September 1836, I came to London, to commence my medical studies, and brought with me a letter from my late master, containing an account of the health of his wife, who had been in London the previous summer in order to consult an accoucheur-physician. This business-letter served as an introduction to Dr. Lee, who during the sessions 1836-37, 1837-38, 1838-39, frequently invited me to his house, and upon whom I as frequently called without invitation. After passing my examinations, in May, 1839, I visited the continental schools, where I continued until November, 1840. It was during this period that the discussion on the nerves of the uterus began, by Dr. Lee presenting a paper to the Royal Society in December, 1839, and it was from him only that I

heard the account of it, after my return to London, in November, 1840. In October, 1841, I sent in my testimonials to a dispensary, as a candidate for the office of surgeon, and at that time Dr. Lee gave me the following certificate:—

“I have been well acquainted with Mr. Beck for several years; and I consider him highly qualified by his talents, professional attainments, and character, to fill the office of surgeon to any public institution.

“ROBERT LEE, M.D., F.R.S.,

Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Physician to the British Lying-in Institution, &c.

“Oct. 6th, 1841.”

So much for the time and motive of my introduction to Dr. Lee. During the whole of 1842 I continued a frequent visitor at Dr. Lee's, and saw all his preparations, and his mode of dissection. I also believed his statements to be correct, when, in February, 1843, I became possessed of the uterus of a woman who died from hæmorrhage at the full period of pregnancy. This uterus I offered to Dr. Lee; and upon his stating that his time was so much occupied as to prevent him making use of it, I undertook the dissection myself. This is a correct version of the artfully worded sentence, “Having expressed a desire to dissect the parts myself, I willingly gave up to him, as he has stated, the uterus of a woman who had died soon after delivery from hæmorrhage”—a sentence which has made many suppose that I received the preparation from Dr. Lee. I removed the uterus the day after the death of the woman; and as Dr. Lee had declined it, I proposed, with Dr. Lee's knowledge and approbation, to make a preparation of it for the museum of University College. A day or two afterwards, having removed the preparation to the College, I met Dr. Sharpey there, who approved of my intention. Now, I declare that this was the first communication of any kind that I had had with Dr. Sharpey on the subject.

In the face of these facts, with which Dr. Lee was perfectly acquainted, he has sent forth the unfounded assertion that Dr. Sharpey instigated me to commence the inquiries; and now insinuates that, for unworthy motives, I obtained an introduction to him about December, 1842. I need scarcely add, that both of these insinuations are without any foundation whatever.

I regret being obliged to assure Dr. Lee that his motives for these insinuations are, by this time, too well understood. Having played this same game over more than once before, he has taught us the style of his tactics, which is, that as soon as he becomes aware of the tottering position in which any of his pretended discoveries are placed, he seeks to turn the scientific discussion of the subject by engaging in personal animosities and personal recriminations.

It is further stated by Dr. Lee—“After a considerable period, I was invited to see the progress he (Mr. Beck) had made, and was extremely mortified to find that the uterus was immersed in foul spirit and water, and in a half-putrid state.” This is certainly a great mistake. That it was immersed in spirit and water is correct, for in that fluid I conducted my first dissection, preferring it to alcohol, in consequence of its changing the appearance of the tissues much less than that strong spirit which is used by Dr. Lee, and at the same time perfectly preserving the preparation. I cannot produce this spirit and water to show that it was not “foul;” but I am more fortunate in the preparation, a slight examination of which will show that it is not, nor ever has been, in a “half-putrid state.” As this is a matter of fact which can be decided at any time, I can confidently appeal to the preparation, to show that it has always been in a state of perfect preservation, and that this statement is as unfounded as the others.

Dr. Lee again says, “He (Mr. Beck) informed me that the dilute alcohol was supplied by University College, at the request of Dr. Sharpey, and that the expense already incurred was so great that he was afraid to solicit another supply, and that pure alcohol was out of the question.” It might appear unnecessary to notice this trifling statement, were it not to show the general inaccuracy which prevails. I could not, and I feel assured I never did, say anything so far from the facts. Had I conducted the dissection at University College, as was originally intended, I should, as a matter of course, have been supplied with the spirit; but as it was removed to my house, I only received about one pint, with which the preparation was covered in the first instance. The remainder was procured at my own expense.

Dr. Lee next states, “On examining the preparation, I found that the great bloodvessels, with all their accompanying ganglia and nerves, had been cut away, and that the right hypogastric ganglion had been torn in pieces. I advised him (Mr. Beck) to procure a proper supply of alcohol, and examine

the left side of the uterus, which was undisturbed, where he could not fail to find the ganglia and nerves." As far as I can remember, Dr. Lee never attempted an examination at any of his visits to my house but once; and then, standing by the side of the table on which the preparation was placed, and taking hold of the hypogastric plexus with the forceps, he put it on the stretch, and looked at the dissection for about half a minute—a short method of making an examination into a minute anatomical question, and a quick way of arriving at important conclusions.

Dr. Lee is also peculiarly infelicitous in his description of the preparation. He says, "The left side of the uterus was undisturbed." Unfortunately for this statement, it is dissected after Dr. Lee's manner,—by picking out the very loose cellular tissue. "The hypogastric ganglion" is there, not "torn to pieces," but exists as a mass, "about two inches in length," and "the great bloodvessels, with all their accompanying ganglia and nerves," are not "cut away" on that side. When I found that I differed from Dr. Lee in the results of my inquiries, it was my object to test the correctness of my conclusion in various ways. And one of the methods adopted was to dissect the opposite side of the uterus, to see if I could arrive at the same results as Dr. Lee, and then to examine where the difference between the two existed. This dissection was conducted while continuing that of the opposite side, working sometimes at one, sometimes at the other, as a relief to my eyes. Thus, Dr. Lee's ganglia and nerves were known and demonstrated, on the same preparation, from the commencement of the inquiries. In proof of these facts I can again appeal to the preparation.

How Dr. Lee could state the following, I am at a loss to understand:—"This proposal was met with a flat denial that any ganglia existed at the neck, or nervous structures on the body, of the uterus." I am quite certain that I never said it. I could not give a "flat denial" to structures which were every day before my eyes,—which I have described in my paper,—which I carefully watched as the artist drew them, and as carefully watched as the engraver worked who engraved them. Besides, the "proposal," which Dr. Lee speaks of, was, "to examine the left side of the uterus," which, he says, "was undisturbed," but which was already dissected at the time this "proposal" is supposed to have been made.

The following statement requires an explanation:—"This is the only dissection Mr. Beck has made of the nerves of the gravid uterus." It is true that I have only finished one complete dissection, yet that dissection has been verified, in all its leading particulars, on four recent uteri. Following out the plan which I had adopted, in testing the conclusions in various ways, I have verified all the chief points in gravid uteri while in the recent state.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Upper Marylebone-street, Nov. 1846.

T. SNOW BECK.

## PREPARATIONS OF NERVES OF THE UTERUS BY DR. LEE AND MR. BECK.

(REPLY OF PROFESSOR SHARPEY TO DR. LEE.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My attention has been called to a statement in your last number, setting forth Dr. Lee's complaints against me, which, as it professes to come from Dr. Lee himself, I feel called on to notice.

Dr. Lee charges me in substance with having first ignorantly and imprudently committed myself to an opinion adverse to his views; then employed Mr. Beck to make a dissection in order to confute them, or availed myself of Mr. Beck's subserviency for that purpose; and lastly, exerted myself unfairly to procure for Mr. Beck a reward from the Royal Society,—in short, with having striven, *per fas aut nefas*, to show that Dr. Lee was wrong.

Now nothing can be farther from the truth than this scandalous accusation, and I thought I had sufficiently refuted it when it was first publicly advanced; but Dr. Lee, with characteristic vehemence and pertinacity, still insists on fastening it on me, and forces me again most reluctantly to appear in a personal dispute.

Dr. Lee is quite wrong in connecting me so intimately and exclusively with Mr. Beck's dissections. At first, in fact, he was more connected with them himself. He had for several years been on intimate terms with Mr. Beck, whilst I had had very little intercourse with that gentleman from the time he had ceased to be a pupil; and, moreover, Mr. Beck was a zealous supporter of Dr. Lee's views. Mr. Beck offered to

make a preparation, exhibiting Dr. Lee's nerves, for the museum of University College, where he had been a student, and naturally applied to me, as taking rather an active concern in the museum, and as likely to approve of his purpose. This he did with the cognizance and approval of Dr. Lee.

Mr. Beck made his dissections at his own house, quite independently of me. I saw him but seldom while he was so engaged, more seldom than Dr. Lee himself, until the real nature of that gentleman's discoveries began to appear, after which, indeed, the doctor withdrew, telling people, then, that the preparation was putrid and good for nothing. While I have every reliance to place on Mr. Beck's accuracy, I am as little responsible for his results as any one of the intelligent anatomists who have seen and approved of his dissections; and it is base to insinuate that he contrived to make his dissections coincide with my prepossessions. Such may, perhaps, be Dr. Lee's view of the relation that ought to subsist between teacher and pupil, but it is not mine.

Will it be believed that Dr. Lee, knowing all this, actually furnished information to THE LANCET, on the faith of which it was charged against me, that Mr. Beck's dissections were made at my instigation for an unworthy end? And yet, on authority which cannot well be doubted, I am assured that he did so. Indeed, in his present communication, he insinuates the same thing, and that is perhaps worse. What reliance can, after this, be placed on Dr. Lee's averments? His imagination seems to warm with his animosity.

I deny that I acted unfairly or unbecomingly as a referee on Mr. Beck's paper at the Royal Society. It is true, that had I thought of the Royal Medal at the time I was named a referee, and of the responsibility that might afterwards fall on me in that capacity, I should probably, under the circumstances, have persisted in declining the duty; but whatever share I had in making what I consider a just award, nothing can be more unfair than to say, in the sense in which Dr. Lee wishes the terms to be understood, that the award was made "on my recommendation," as indeed he might by this time have learnt.

Dr. Lee says,—“After the publication of my second paper in the *Philosophical Transactions*, in 1842, at one of the *soirées* of the Marquis of Northampton, Dr. Sharpey, with whom I have never been intimately acquainted, in a peculiarly abrupt manner, observed to me, that in three years I would give up, or be compelled to forego, all that I had published respecting the nerves of the uterus.”

It seems almost frivolous to advert to such a matter; but as, in order to give consistency to his accusations, Dr. Lee connects it, as a motive, with Mr. Beck's undertaking, it may be as well to explain what the remark really was, and what it meant.

It is quite true that, at one of the evening meetings referred to, Dr. Lee, although, as he correctly says, I had never been honoured with his intimate acquaintance, yet honoured me, as he was in the habit of honouring many others, by entering into conversation with me on the never-failing subject of his nerves, in the course of which conversation (and not "abruptly") I remarked, that "in two years he would not believe in his nerves himself." I am quite confident as to the words, as well as their meaning; and as to the time, according to the best of my recollection of a trivial and unpremeditated remark, it was an older story than Dr. Lee represents. In any case it is ridiculous to connect it with Mr. Beck's dissections; nothing was farther from my mind than Dr. Lee and his nerves when Mr. Beck came to me. Indeed, not having been able to satisfy Dr. Lee by an acquiescence in his views, I had found good reason to concern myself about him and his nerves no more than I could help. The meaning of my remark, which was more than half in joke, was merely that he would before long change his mind. The "prediction," such as it was, seems, after all, to have been justified, although through no agency of mine; for I learn that he admitted to Mr. Kiernan that he had been in error in his first dissections, and expressed his gratitude to that gentleman for saving him from further committing himself to a serious blunder. It is true that, at a later period, both Mr. Kiernan and Mr. Owen, like other recusants, came in for a share of his censure; and what may be his opinions now on the matter it would, perhaps, be difficult precisely to say.

But leaving these personal matters, let us turn for a moment to the scientific points in dispute to which he refers.

Of course it was well known, before Dr. Lee, that the uterus had nerves. The claims Dr. Lee puts forth consist chiefly in having discovered a large ganglion on each side of the neck of the uterus, which he calls the utero-cervical ganglion, and also two large flat "sub-peritoneal ganglia" on