

**Sketch of John Lee : the very reverend the principal of the University of Edinburgh, etc. / by Sir John Rose Cormack.**

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S  
JOHN L

THE VERY REVEREND  
UNIVERSITY

[BORN

SIR JOHN L

DOCTOR OF DIVINITY OF OXFORD  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
LORD OF THE MANOR OF  
OXFORD

*Reprinted for Private Circulation*

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SKETCH  
OF  
JOHN LEE, D.D., M.D.,

ETC., ETC.,

THE VERY REVEREND THE PRINCIPAL OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

[BORN, 1779: DIED, 1859.]

BY  
SIR JOHN ROSE CORMACK, F.R.S.E.

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE OF EDINBURGH AND OF PARIS: FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGES  
OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON AND EDINBURGH: CHEVALIER OF THE  
LEGION OF HONOUR: PHYSICIAN TO THE HERTFORD  
BRITISH HOSPITAL OF PARIS.

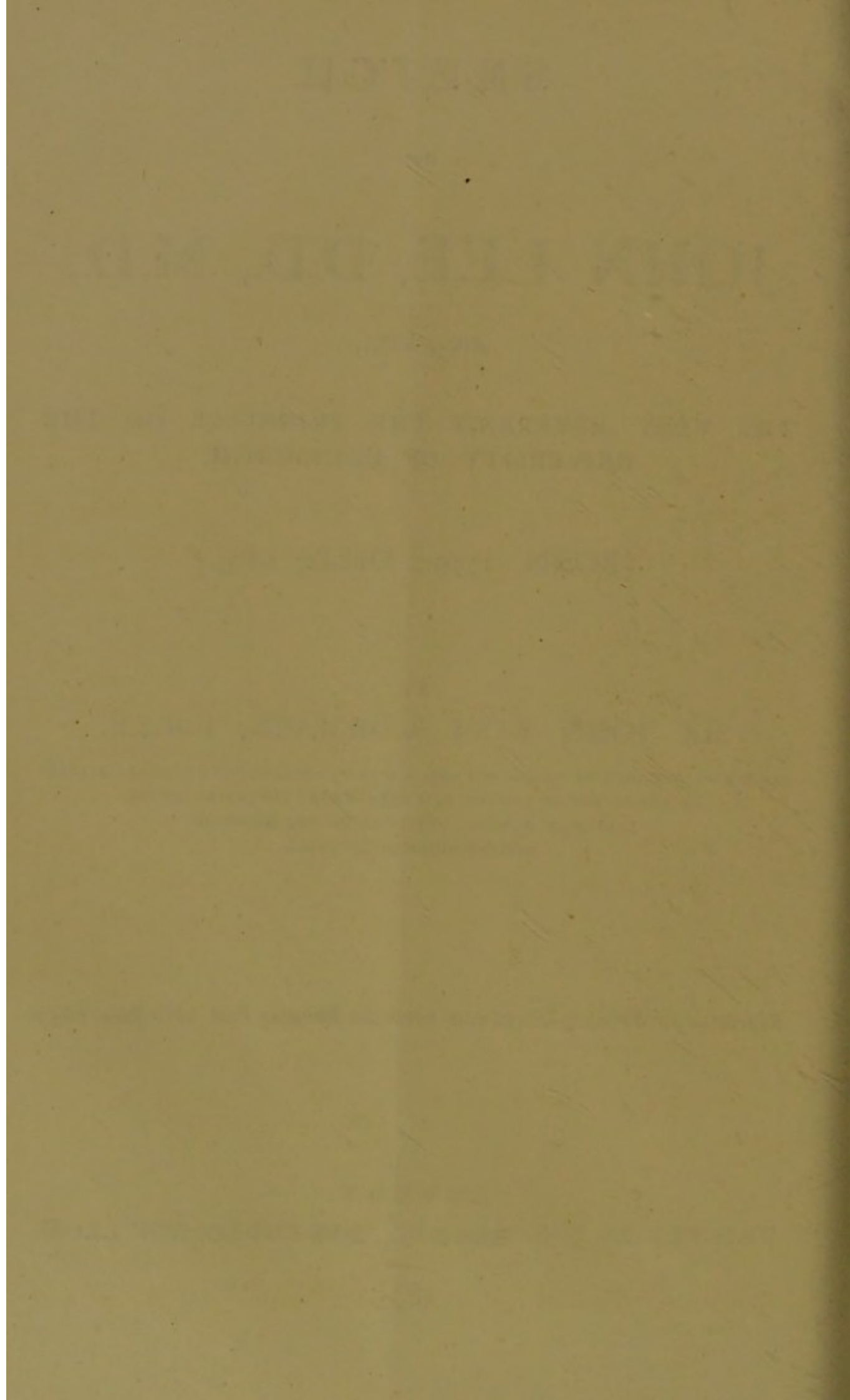
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LONDON:  
PRINTED BY J. E. ADLARD, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

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1875.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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I WROTE the following slight sketch of the life and character of Principal Lee of the University of Edinburgh in July, 1859, about two months after his death; and I published it anonymously on the 28th of July, 1859, in a London newspaper—*The Morning Post*.

Recently, I met a gentleman who knew Principal Lee well, as a public man, in the last twenty years of his career. We fully discussed him. In the course of our conversation, the gentleman referred admiringly to my sketch in the *Morning Post*, neither knowing nor suspecting that I was the biographer he was commending. He expressed great regret at having lost a copy of the article in question which he had cut from an Edinburgh newspaper, where it was reproduced on its first appearance. The accidental interview now mentioned originated the idea of printing copies for a few friends.

Believing my sketch to be nearly correct in its biographical details, and a fairly successful attempt to portray a very remarkable character, I have abstained from alterations and

additions. The anonymity under which it was written, and the place in which it originally appeared, obliged me to adopt certain technicalities of style, and to omit the expression of my personal feelings of profound respect and intense personal affection for the dear old man with whose frequent visits to the Manse of Stow—my first home—are delightfully blended some of the most instructive memories of my childhood and youth.

J. R. C.

PARIS: 27th July, 1875.



SKETCH  
OF  
JOHN LEE, D.D., M.D., &c., &c.

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“In my Father’s house are many mansions : if it were not so I would have told you.” From these words, so replete with divine consolation and encouragement, Dr. Veitch preached an impressive and beautiful sermon on the 8th of May, being the first Sunday after the death of the Very Rev. Principal Lee, a venerable man of letters, who formed a feature in the society of the northern capital. The intrinsic excellence of the sermon well entitled it to the publicity of the press ; but most probably we are less indebted for its appearance to its general merits than to the sketch of the late Principal with which it thus concludes :—

“Many at all times are the disciples sorrowing under bereavement that need the solace of the Saviour’s words. Every month, every week, is reminding us that this world has no home for man, and that he grows up in it only to find himself a sojourner and to die. But the past week has presented to us a lesson regarding the evanescence of this earthly state more solemn and impressive than arises from the ordinary bereavements which affect only particular individuals and families. We have to lament what cannot be otherwise regarded than as a great public loss—the death of a man eminent in character and station, venerable in years and wisdom, the head of our University, a master in Israel, a father in the school of the prophets. How richly was he endowed with the finest talents, and how carefully had he cultivated them ! How



various and extensive were his acquirements! In the university over which he so ably presided there was no branch of study to which he was a stranger, and scarcely was there a chair, whether in literature or in science, which he could not have filled with credit to himself and with advantage to the interests of philosophy and learning. In acquaintance with the literary and ecclesiastical history of our country, with the men, the books, and manuscripts of former times, he was without a rival, being thoroughly conversant, not merely with the more prominent characters and events, but with the secret history of factions and with the minutest details affecting the public institutions and social economy of any particular period. It might seem as though he had lived among the great men, whom others know only by name, and had made himself personally acquainted with their opinions and peculiarities, and with their habits and manners, even in the privacy of domestic intercourse. He delighted in the heroic times when men were in earnest contending for principle—more anxious to assert and establish truth than to tolerate error; and, instead of yielding with what some might have termed a wise expediency to the ruling spirit of the age, manfully, through faith in God's Word, resisted unto blood and sacrificed their lives that they might secure the triumph of pure religion and civil liberty and further the great cause of social improvement. If their faults did not escape his intelligent and candid criticism, he did not forget their trying circumstances under the most frightful persecution and tyranny that ever afflicted a church and nation; but, while regretting their occasional excesses, admired their dauntless courage, their noble constancy, their love of learning, and their glowing piety. He saw the happy result of their arduous and successful contendings in the many long years of advancing civilisation and prosperity which have changed our barren land into a garden and its rude inhabitants into a people distinguished at home and abroad for their intelligence, prudence, and industry. It will ever be regretted that, through causes over which he probably had little control, he has departed without accomplishing the original design of his historical researches and permanently recording, as he could so well have done, in his beautiful style the vast stores of information which he had accumulated, had ever fully at command, and was most generous in communicating to others. Habits of severe and protracted study in the earlier period of his life enfeebled his future health, occasioning perhaps much of the variableness and irresolution which made him shrink from a task of severe and continuous labour, and prevented him from employing his genius to full advantage, and from occupying at times the influential position assumed by others of far inferior powers, but of stronger nerve. His finest pieces—his pastoral letters, his academic addresses, and most of his lectures and sermons—were thrown off with the utmost ease and rapidity, showing how ready were his gifts, how exuberant his resources, and what he might have done had he only been possessed of sustained and persevering energy. Distinguished he would have been in the greatest ages of



our country ; but in our own time he in many respects stood alone, like some spreading oak of ancient centuries among the saplings that have recently grown up around it ; and now the vast space he occupied is fully discovered only by the sad circumstances of his removal. The Church has been deprived of his counsel in her assemblies at a time when her increasing trials more than ever require the aid that might have been furnished by his wisdom and experience ; whilst her students for the ministry have lost the guidance of his sound doctrine, so much needed when we are threatened with a serious departure from Gospel truth, and rationalism is taught and popularly preached under the disguise of Evangelical language, and with a semblance of spiritual fervour. No more is this man of God among us, either to join with us as a worshipper, or in deep-toned utterance to favour us with his rich devotional eloquence, in which we seemed to hear sweetly and harmoniously intermingling the voices of prophets and apostles, of holy psalms and prudent proverbs, and all uniting in good tidings to the meek, in comfort to the afflicted, in commending the Lord Jesus as the only and Almighty Saviour of our perishing race. There are those that gratefully remember his public ministrations alike in the pulpit and in the chair ; and there are those besides who mourn the loss of his private friendship, and who knew him, not merely as he was in general intercourse, a man of dignified and courteous deportment, but as, in the happier moments of familiar intimacy, the most delightful of companions, relaxing from his habitual gravity into childlike playfulness, and enlivening conversation with the charms of wit and pleasantry—a man of warm affections and keenest sensibility, ever ready to sympathise with the afflicted, and recognising in the distresses of those who had injured him an ample apology for the wrong they had done him, and an opportunity of overcoming their evil with good. Nowhere did he appear to so much advantage as in the bosom of his own family. He was spared through a life of laborious study, of much bodily infirmity, of many successes and many trials, to sink under the feebleness of age ; but yet to the last his mind, his heart, and feelings were all young, and warm, and vigorous ; and whilst nature was failing his faith was strong—his faith was lively. He died, not as sinking in death's cold oblivion, but as having his spirit irradiated with light from within the vail—as following Jesus in the path of life, and departing to be with Him in the mansions of his Father's house.”\*

Those who were intimately acquainted with Principal Lee will at once gratefully accept the eloquent paragraphs which we have now quoted as a faithful, charming picture

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\* “Heaven the Believer's Home.” A Sermon preached in St. Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh, on occasion of the death of the Very Rev. Principal Lee, Sabbath, May 8, 1859. By James Veitch, D.D. William Blackwood and Sons.



of their departed friend. It will bring him again before them with all the dignity of his manner as a public man, and with all the geniality, wit, and playfulness of his familiar intercourse. But inasmuch as Dr. Veitch has adhered to the lines of strict truthfulness, and avoided the unmeaning platitudes of indiscriminating panegyric, his picture will also recal some peculiarities of character which were unquestionable defects. Principal Lee discharged all the important duties belonging to his important offices with zeal, energy, and success; yet, in respect of other enterprises, he showed variableness and irresolution in using his splendid accomplishments. A want of fixity of purpose, a mental unfitness, or a dislike to labour continuously at the same task, shipwrecked great literary projects for which long study had thoroughly prepared him. Dr. Veitch has ascribed the abandonment of enterprises in his riper years to want of nerve occasioned by enfeebled health, the legacy from habits of severe study in the earlier period of his life. In this opinion there is much truth. Perhaps, however, to explain his irresolution completely, we must take into account an inborn restlessness of mind, the existence of which may be fairly surmised from the number and variety of public appointments which he held during his career. Considering the narrow limits for ambition and promotion in the Established Church of Scotland, the diversity of important offices which Dr. Lee obtained is most remarkable. It is explained partly by his variety of aptitude, and partly by his variableness of plan.

As several very inaccurate biographical sketches of Principal Lee have appeared in the newspapers, a concise and circumstantial sketch of his origin and career may be acceptable and instructive. We should like to see one or more volumes of his published and unpublished works competently edited, and accompanied by an account of his life and a selection from his correspondence. He was a perfect master of the epistolary art; and some of his letters now before us are among the finest specimens of this description of composition with which we are acquainted.



John Lee, the only child of his parents, was born on the 22nd November, 1779, at Torwoodlee Mains, a farm situate in that part of the parish of Stow which belongs to the county of Selkirk. James Lee, his father, followed the handicraft of weaving, which in his day was one of considerable importance in a thinly-peopled and secluded pastoral country such as then was the vale of Gala. The large and wealthy manufacturing town of Galashiels did not then exist ; and in the place which it now occupies there was only a small hamlet, with one small shop. James Lees (for Lees, and not Lee, was his name) was an upright and respected man. He was not an acute man. In religious matters he was earnest, and, like many of the pious yeomanry and peasantry of his day, he embarked heart and soul in the cause of the two brothers Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine. They were ministers of the Established Church of Scotland who seceded from her communion, and founded the first great division of the Presbyterianism of the north. The Secession arose from defections in doctrine and discipline within the Established Church—defections which the brothers Erskine and others, who found no fault with its principles and constitution, laboured without success for a time to remedy. Ultimately, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine were declared to be no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland. They protested against this sentence, “appealing to the first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.” Its original principles have been modified by political changes, but the body still exists as part of the “United Presbyterian Church of Scotland,” one of the three great sections of modern Scottish Presbyterianism. The two other divisions are the Established Church and the Free Church. Principal Lee originally intended to study for the Secession Church, but he early abandoned that plan. He retained throughout his whole career a warm and respectful feeling towards the old Seceders and their traditions. His parents remained stanch Seceders till their death, long before which time their son had attained a leading position



among learned men and as a minister of the Establishment. This diversity of opinion caused no estrangement. Dr. Lee's devotion to his parents during their declining years was a beautiful trait in his character.

Principal Lee's mother (Helen Paterson) was to the end of her career a very remarkable woman. At the age of eighty-nine, when she died, her intellect and memory remained nearly as clear and as good as they had ever been. In her day books were costly and rare. For this reason they were all the more carefully chosen, esteemed, and read. Mrs. Lee had not read many books; but she had thoroughly studied some notable works in theology, history, philosophy, and poetry. Her knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and of the writings of Milton was minute and discriminating. Their sublimities were keenly relished by her true though untutored taste. When conversing with persons of education, she frequently indicated this by remarks which astonished the listener by their force and freshness. A few days before her death her increasing infirmities were talked over between her and her frequent visitor, the parish minister. It was admitted by both that her bodily strength was rapidly failing. She said, with a cheerful smile, that although her living or dying could not, so far as she could see, be a matter of the least importance to any one except herself, she was not weary of life with all its infirmities, as she felt that there must be truth in Milton's remark, that God is served by those "who only stand and wait." Incidents and anecdotes of this kind, though they refer not to a person of celebrity, are not the less instructive. Such histories deserve attention, because they show the existence of veins of native gold deep down in the social strata. It is from these fresh, exhaustless mines that a nation such as ours draws its elements of perennial greatness. When we read of heroes, philosophers, and poets rising from obscurity to high renown, how often do we forget that their greatness was born and nurtured in their own humble homes. Mr. Charles Reade says, in the opening sentences of "A Good Fight"—that charming domestic history now so deeply



interesting the better class of fiction-readers :—"Not a day passes over the earth but men and women of no note do great deeds, speak great words, and suffer noble sorrows. Of these obscure heroes, philosophers, and martyrs, the greater part will never be known till that day when many that are great shall be small, and the small great ; but on others the world's knowledge may be said to sleep. Their lives and characters lie hidden from nations in the very annals that record them. The general reader cannot feel them, they are presented so curtly and coldly ; they are not like breathing stories appealing to the heart, but little historic hailstones, striking him only to glance off his bosom ; nor can he understand them, for epitomes are not narratives, as skeletons are not human figures."

We write not "a breathing story." We only offer a few curt notices of Principal Lee's mother, a woman of the Scottish peasantry, hoping that they may prove suggestive to those who love to trace the visible waves of human thought far back into the obscurities of the ever flowing stream.\*

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\* I may now add as a note what would have been out of place in the text on its first appearance—that being at home during the College vacation, I had accidentally the privilege of accompanying my father the late Rev. John Cormack, D.D., Minister of Stow, upon the occasion above alluded to when Mrs. Lee so happily referred to those servants of the Lord "who only stand and wait." I likewise accompanied him on his daily visit to Mrs. Lee's bedside on the forenoon of the day on which she died. Her removal did not then seem nearer at hand than it had been for some previous weeks, during which period there had been a recurrence of sudden and alarming faintness. Late in the evening she sent an urgent message to my father that she was not likely to live till the morning and that she would like much to see him once more. He immediately obeyed the summons: I went with him to her house which was close at hand. On entering, we found her maid giving her a little water in teaspoonfuls. Mrs. Lee said to my father in a feeble whisper—"I am getting over it: I have been very faint since before I sent for you: pray: in a few minutes, I will be able to speak to you." Only one or two sentences of an extempore prayer had been uttered, when her lower jaw was observed to fall. In two or three minutes more, when the prayer had ceased, we perceived that her spirit had been released from its time-worn tenement.

Notwithstanding the urgent and engrossing nature of Principal Lee's



Mrs. Lee's mind was highly imaginative and devotional, and also decidedly metaphysical. Her godly life and exemplary discharge of her domestic duties were noted and admired by her neighbours. Her son received from her his first instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. She taught him the alphabet and spelling from the two-page primer prefixed to the common edition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, then and now the theological textbook of Scottish Presbyterianism in all its divisions. In that day it was usual to commence the education of children with this catechism, and its prefixed primer, a custom which Dr. Lee used to delight to discourse upon when describing the social changes which had occurred in Scotland since his mother taught him. Fortified by his mother's preliminary instruction, Dr. Lee began, when about ten years of age, to attend a small day-school at Cadonlee, about two miles distant from his home. The school was taught by a Mr. James Paris, who was afterwards promoted to the office of parish schoolmaster of Stow. This position, after a long incumbency, he was obliged to resign from habits of intemperance. Mr. Paris understood and taught the rudiments of the ordinary branches of a sound English education in a way far beyond the majority of the teachers of his time. He was possessed of great native powers of mind, and was a most fascinating member of the village social circle. His conversational powers, and his gift of rhyming pleasantly in the Scottish dialect, drew him latterly into a vortex of dissipation. When Dr. Lee was his pupil, though somewhat addicted to toddy and ale, he taught with diligence and spirit. Dr. Lee spoke of him as a genial pedagogue ; and he did not cast off the old

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public duties he was much with his mother during the last few years of her life. His intense devotion and love to her was a noble feature in his character. He was in the habit of frequently coming out from Edinburgh to Stow on the Friday or Saturday, remaining till the Monday. On these occasions, he always slept and dined at the manse. My father and he had been fellow students at the University of Edinburgh, and were, to my knowledge, as far back as my memory carries me on terms of the closest and most affectionate intimacy.—J. R. C. Paris, 27th July, 1875.



schoolmaster in his adversity. Mr. Paris was peculiarly fond of recounting the early glories of Cadonlee school dwelling with garrulous pride upon the fact that he there had at the same time Dr. John Lee as a pupil, and Dr. John Leyden as an usher.

From the school of Cadonlee Dr. Lee went to the University of Edinburgh, where he studied for a number of years with extraordinary assiduity classics, philosophy, medicine, and theology. His health never recovered from the injury it sustained from the overwork and necessary privations of his student-life in Edinburgh. His means were so limited as to make mere subsistence and a decent exterior great difficulties in the first years of his university career. Afterwards, his talents and accomplishments procured for him, through the recommendations of the professors, good occupation as a tutor, and so relieved him from hardships with which, probably, he could not have much longer battled. In 1801, when in his twenty-third year, Dr. Lee took the degree of M.D. at the University of Edinburgh, having passed through the various required courses of studies and examinations. His graduation thesis was "*De Viribus Animi*." The excellence of the Latin called forth the warm commendation of the late Dr. Gregory, a professor celebrated for his elegant Latin composition. It is a tradition in Edinburgh that Dr. Gregory characterised the language of the thesis, "*De Viribus Animi*," as Ciceronian. Dr. Lee never practised the healing art; and we are inclined to believe that he never had any such intentions. Mental versatility, combined with a love of science, were probably the causes which led him to follow the medical curriculum, after attending the Arts classes. Perhaps, also, he wished to fit himself for a chair in natural science in a British or foreign university. It is certain that he pursued chemistry at one period with much earnestness. He is believed to have given much assistance to Professor Robison in editing Dr. Black's "*Lectures on Chemistry*." We have heard that Professor Robison (who had much intercourse with Russia) having been employed



to select two professors for one of the Russian universities, recommended Dr. Lee for a chair of Moral Philosophy and Sir David Brewster for a chair of Natural Philosophy. With a view to the Russian appointment Dr. Lee had actually prepared several Latin Lectures on moral philosophy. This labour was premature. The Emperor Paul's estrangement from this country and his alliance with France put an end to the nearly completed negotiations.

In 1804 Dr. Lee was licensed as a "Preacher of the Gospel." In 1807 he was ordained to the pastoral charge of the Presbyterian Chapel in Hanover Street, Long Acre, London. Within a very short time he became minister of the parish of Peebles in Scotland. From Peebles he removed to Aberdeen in or about 1820. He about the same time received and accepted the chair of Church History in St Mary's College, St. Andrews, where he delivered, personally and by proxy, lectures in 1820. He did not reside there, but at Aberdeen, where he had accepted the chair of Moral Philosophy. He held both offices at the same time, lecturing sometimes at the one place, and sometimes at the other, generally, however, sending his lectures to be read for him at St. Andrews. His inability to decide between the two incompatible appointments led him in 1821 to seek for and obtain a presentation to the first living in the Parish of Canongate, Edinburgh. At a later date he displayed somewhat similar indecision between an Edinburgh living and the Principality of the United Colleges of S. Salvator and S. Leonard, in the University of St. Andrews. Dr. Lee was translated from the Canongate living to Lady Yester's Church, and afterwards to the Old Church parish, both in Edinburgh. In 1827, when incumbent of Lady Yester's he was appointed Principal Clerk of the Assembly. In 1840 he resigned his church living, upon his appointment as Primarius Professor of Divinity and Principal of the University of Edinburgh. This latter appointment he held, in conjunction with others, at his death. The smallness of the University emoluments rendered his plurality of offices not only excusable but



essential to the maintenance of a social position worthy of his University status.

Besides the Principality of the University of Edinburgh, Dr. Lee was at the time of his decease Primarius Professor of Divinity in the same institution, Principal Clerk of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and Dean of the Chapel Royal. At one time the incumbents of parishes were allowed to hold University appointments. This has been disallowed for many years, and the result has been that chairs have often been given to professors less on the ground of peculiar fitness than on account of their being possessed of private fortune or some lucrative employment tenable conjointly with a professorship. Under the recent Scottish Universities Act provision is made for remedying this great evil. Till Dr. Lee received the deanship of the Chapel Royal—almost a sinecure—he was greatly straitened in circumstances by the resignation of his living. Indeed, before this time his frequent change of residence, the expenses of a large family, and the accumulation of a costly library, had much hampered his pecuniary resources. From this state he extricated himself by the sale of his collection of books (which contained many very valuable and rare editions), as well as by other judicious arrangements. The following is, we believe, a tolerably correct account of Dr. Lee's offices and emoluments at the date of his decease:—Salary as Principal, £151 2s. 2d. ; salary as Divinity Professor, £196 2s. 2d. ; fees of £2 2s. each from about 100 students, say £210 ; income as one of the Deans of the Chapel Royal, varying with the price of grain, between £700 and £800—say £700 ; and salary as Principal Clerk to the General Assembly, £124 9s. His total official income, according to these calculations, amounted to £1381 13s. 4d. ; while only £152 2s. 2d. was derived from the appointment chiefly identified with his social status. Upon his appointment as Principal, on the death of his predecessor, Dr. Baird, the conjoined divinity appointment was nominal or honorary. It carried with it neither teaching duties nor emoluments. At that time Dr. Chalmers, as Professor of Divinity, taught



the advanced theological classes. On the resignation of Dr. Chalmers, at the disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, Dr. Lee received his second divinity appointment, and undertook its teaching duties. These he performed to the last with great ability and acceptance. On the death of Dr. Chalmers' predecessor, and before Dr. Chalmers was appointed, Dr. Lee taught the divinity class for one session to accommodate the University authorities. His lectures during this term of honorary office were greatly appreciated by the students, and established his reputation both as a learned theologian and as a stanch defender of the doctrines of his Church set forth in her standards, and so pertinaciously contended for in the sturdy era of Scottish Presbyterianism. He was a zealous Presbyterian of the old school; but he was not in any degree intolerant in word or sentiment towards those from whose theological or political opinions he differed.

Dr. Lee's published works are not numerous, nor are any of them, though good in themselves, fair representatives of his known capabilities. He was a man of profound and accurate learning. He was generally supposed, and not without reason, to be better acquainted with the civil and ecclesiastical history of Scotland than any of his predecessors or contemporaries. The late celebrated Dr. M'Crie was perhaps nearly his equal in the knowledge of the history of the Scottish Church—a history, by the way, which has not yet been fully, faithfully, and intelligently written. But we question whether Dr. M'Crie had a knowledge quite so extensive and minute of this subject. Unless Dr. Lee has left behind him some part of a great historical work on Scotland, which he was known to have begun in 1824, and to have done something to at various later dates, his real powers in this department will always remain open to challenge. It is, however, only justice to Dr. Lee to state that Dr. M'Crie owed to him much of the information contained in his "Life of Knox;" and our impression, from documents now before us, is, that in regard to the "Life of Melville," very much of its value was derived from that MS. to which



we have referred as commenced in 1824. This he generously lent to Dr. M'Crie. He told an intimate friend (our informant) that it had been "returned to him in such a state of mutilation, and so perfumed with tobacco-smoke, that he could never afterwards look into it with any pleasure." Dr. M'Crie has acknowledged in prefaces his great obligations to Dr. Lee; but those obligations were probably far greater than any casual reader would be led to suppose.

Dr. Lee's minute knowledge of Scottish ecclesiastical affairs seemed sometimes to be burdensome to him. He was apt to lose sight of great points in a debate, and to entangle both himself and others in subordinate details. In the General Assembly, of which he was a frequent member, this tendency was sometimes almost ludicrously exhibited. At all events it was often privately used in later years by clerical and lay members of that house as the basis of jokes at the expense of the venerable old man. Caricaturists of this school, not without a slight foundation of truth to rest upon, were wont to say that he made a point of speaking on most subjects under discussion, in presbytery, synod, or assembly, which afforded an opportunity of pouring forth his hoarded dates, facts, and anecdotes. They would say that he generally rose under the apparent stimulus of displeasure or pity at a speaker's ignorance of some minute and recondite matter; that he would glory to prove, in an argument of half-an-hour's length, that the name of a divine mentioned by a previous debater was *John*, not *James*, and that James was his *brother*, and not *himself*; that the said John was minister of *Strathbuchie*, and not of *Strathbungo*, as had been ignorantly said; and further, that the meeting of synod at which he acquired immortal fame by testifying against such and such sinful conformities was held on the 1st of April, *old style*, in such a year, and not on the 1st of April, *new style*, as the generality of historians, with shameful dishonesty or ignorance, would lead confiding readers to suppose. Though we set aside such statements, as constructed for amusement and not for belief, we think that they had this much in them, viz., that Dr. Lee's chief vocation in debate was neither to



convince by reasoning nor to persuade by eloquence, but to put everybody right as to matters of form and historical facts. From this peculiarity in his speeches they often failed to indicate the side on which he intended to vote. Nevertheless, his influence in the General Assembly was great. This depended chiefly upon the facility and accuracy with which he could pour forth his vast stores of minute historical knowledge, and his complete acquaintance with the forms of business. The dignity of his bearing, and the universal respect inspired by his private character, no doubt also contributed to give him an influential position in debate, which his diffuseness and deficiency in close argument might have been thought certain to destroy. His absence from the clerk's table at the last Assembly was felt by all as a painful blank. Even those who had been accustomed to look upon him as crotchety and punctilious, missed, with sorrow, the picturesque and erect figure of the good old man. Friends who enjoyed his intimacy, and knew the depth of his affection, can estimate the greatness of the loss which had been sustained—others cannot.

Dr. Lee wrote with great elegance and unction pastoral addresses for the General Assembly, and University occasional addresses. Some of them have been already published. A very interesting volume might be formed by a collection from his published and unpublished works of this class. Some of them are unsurpassable in devotional feeling and in flowing gracefulness of language.

His "Memorial for the Bible Societies," printed as an 8vo. volume in 1824, showed immense research. It was drawn up for the use of counsel in the cause of the "King's Printers *versus* the Bible Societies," and was therefore not sold to the public. About 100 copies only were printed. This masterly exposure of the evils which had resulted from the monopoly of the King's printers prepared the way for the removal of old restrictions, and led to the improved system under which the Bible is now printed in Scotland.

We believe that the following is a nearly complete list of Dr. Lee's printed works :—



1. "Sermon preached before the Royal Dispensary and Vaccine Institutions." By the Rev. John Lee, M.D., Minister of Peebles. Edinburgh, 1809.

2. "Sermon preached before the St. Andrews Lodge of Freemasons." By John Lee, S.T.E.H.P., one of the Masters of St. Mary's College, and Chaplain to the Grand Lodge of Scotland. 1819. [Dr. Lee being at this time Professor of Church History in St. Andrews, the letters S.T.E.H.P. are, we presume, intended to represent the words "Sanctæ Theologiæ, Ecclesiasticæ Historiæ Professor."]

3. "Memorial for the Bible Societies of Scotland." 1824. [This work was drawn up for the use of counsel in the cause of the King's Printers v. the Bible Societies.]

4. "Remarks on the Complaint of the King's Printers, &c." 1826.

5. "Sermon preached before the Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge." 1829.

6. "Letter on the Edinburgh Annuity Tax." 1834.

7. "Letter on Glasgow University." 1837.

8. "Refutation of Charges by Dr. Chalmers, &c." 1837.

9. "Observations on Lyon's History of St. Andrews." 1837.

10. "Admonitions on Lord's Day Observance, Pastoral Letters (of General Assembly) on Family Worship and other subjects." 1834.

Dr. Lee never enjoyed robust health. He had frequent ailments, but during his long life had few severe illnesses. During last winter he was occasionally in very feeble health. For a few days he was unable to meet his class. The most urgent symptom of his malady was a form of dropsy. He rallied so much as to be able to resume his class duties with pleasure to himself. In concluding the labours of his class he told his students that his health was so much re-established that he hoped to meet them again next session. He felt so well that he showed more than usual anxiety to be returned to the General Assembly as the representative of the University. On the day of election of a representative there was a full meeting of the Senate, at which the Principal presided. Professor More (Law), one of his oldest and most intimate friends, proposed, and Professor Pillans (Humanity) seconded, him. Professor Blackie (Greek) proposed Dr. Robert Lee (Biblical Criticism) as the member of Assembly. Professor John Wilson (Agriculture) seconded that proposal. Upon the vote being taken all except Pro-



fessors Blackie and John Wilson voted for the Principal. This gratified him very much. He continued in tolerable health till about a fortnight before his death, when the dropsy reappeared. For ten days before his death he was confined to bed. To the last his mind remained unclouded. He gradually sank till Monday, the 2nd of May, when, at the age of 80 years, he breathed his last in his residence in the College.

On Friday, the 6th of May, his body was laid in the West Kirk (or St. Cuthbert's) burying-ground. Dr. Veitch, of St. Cuthbert's, and Dr. Robertson, Professor of Church History in the University, conducted the devotional services at the house of the deceased. As the *cortége*, consisting of the hearse and fifteen carriages, proceeded by the Bridges and Princes Street to the burying-ground, respectful and sorrowing crowds were assembled. The pall-bearers were three of his sons, viz., the Rev. William Lee, of Roxburgh; Mr. Robert Lee, a member of the Scottish bar; and Mr. David Lee, of London; also Professor J. Shank More, the Rev. Dr. Buist, Captain Aylmer, and Mr. Mowbray. Dr. Lee was twice married. He has left four sons and two daughters. By his second wife, who survives him, he had no family. The only member of his family absent from his death-bed was his eldest son, Dr. James Lee, a medical officer in the Indian Army.



## APPENDIX.

## APPOINTMENTS OF PRINCIPAL LEE.

LETTER OF THE REVD. WILLIAM LEE, D.D.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURANT.

SIR,—You have transferred to your paper of to-day an article from the *Morning Post*, professing to give a sketch of the life of the late Principal Lee. Will you allow me to correct one error in point of fact into which the writer, amidst some other inaccuracies, has fallen, because that mis-statement is made the basis of what, notwithstanding the friendly spirit in which the article is written, I must call an undeserved imputation?

The following is the paragraph to which I refer:—

“From Peebles he removed to Aberdeen in or about 1820. He about the same time received and accepted the Chair of Church History in St. Mary’s College, St. Andrews, where he delivered, personally and by proxy, lectures in 1820. He did not reside there, but at Aberdeen, where he had accepted the Chair of Moral Philosophy. He held both offices at the same time, lecturing sometimes at the one place, sometimes at the other, generally, however, sending his lectures to be read for him at St. Andrews. *His inability to decide between the two incompatible appointments*, led him in 1821 to seek for and obtain a presentation to the first living in the parish of Canongate, Edinburgh.”

The fact is that my father was appointed to the Church History Chair in St. Andrews in April, 1812, and resided and lectured regularly in person till his removal to Edinburgh in 1822. He held the office of Professor of Moral Philosophy at King’s College, Aberdeen (where his lectures were for the most part read by an assistant), during the session 1820-21—retaining certainly, and continuing throughout that winter to discharge the duties of his Professorship in St. Andrews, but for reasons, as under circumstances, very different from those represented in the above extract.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Roxburgh, 30th July, 1859.

WILLIAM LEE.



*LIBRARY OF PRINCIPAL LEE.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST.

SIR,—Will you allow us, as agents for the representatives of the late Very Rev. Principal Lee, of the University of Edinburgh, in correction of a statement which recently appeared in your paper, to mention that it was only a portion (and the works chiefly duplicates) of the extensive and valuable library of the Principal which was sold some years ago? He retained until his death the most valuable portion, to which he continued to make additions both of books and manuscripts.

It is the intention of his representatives to expose his library to sale early next winter.

There are other mistakes in the article containing the above statement, but we will not encroach on your space by pointing out and asking correction of these.

We remain, &c.,

W. and J. COOK, Writers to the Signet.

32, Abercromby-place, Edinburgh, August 6.

[None of our statements regarding the late respected Principal Lee were made unadvisedly; and from competent judges resident in Edinburgh, and intimate friends of the deceased, we have received spontaneous assurances of the substantial accuracy of our leading facts and opinions. With regard to the library, if we erred, we erred justifiably. Some years ago the Principal's library was advertised and catalogued for sale by Messrs. Tait and Nisbit, of Edinburgh. By them a library understood to be the library of Dr. Lee was sold. There was some inaccuracy in the dates we assigned to Dr. Lee's official connection with St. Andrew's and Aberdeen, but essential facts and inferences were not thereby affected. The dates were corrected by our correspondent "C. M." in our impression on Thursday the 28th ult.—*Ed. M. P.*]

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*POSTHUMOUS WORK OF PRINCIPAL LEE.*

IN 1860 two volumes of great value by Principal Lee, edited by his erudite and accomplished son Professor William Lee, D.D., were published by William Blackwood and Sons, of Edinburgh and London, entitled 'Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution Settlement.' By the late Very Rev.



John Lee, D.D., LL.D., with Notes and Appendices from the Author's papers. Edited by his son the Rev. William Lee.

The following is an extract from the preface :—

“ It has often been the subject of regret to others, as it was to himself, that the pressure of engrossing public duties prevented the author from accomplishing a purpose for which, by the concurrent testimony of those of his contemporaries who were best entitled to give an opinion, he was so eminently qualified ; and it is due to his memory to say that the present work, however valuable, and although presented in a form perhaps more adapted for the general reader, in many respects differs in its character from such a contribution to the history of ecclesiastical affairs in this country as he himself desired to give to the world.”

“ Dr. Lee was appointed Professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History in St. Mary's College, S. Andrews, in the year 1812 ; and it was while he held this office that in the Session 1816–1817 he wrote and read to his students the lectures which are now published, and which formed part of a more comprehensive course extending over five sessions, and including ‘ Illustrations of the History and the Prophecies of the Old Testament ; the state of learning and of religious opinions at the period of the advent of our Saviour, and of the most material facts which occurred during the lives of the Apostles and their immediate successors ; with the subsequent history of the Church down to the Reformation.’ While thus written at a comparatively early period of his life, and without any view to publication, these lectures on the Scottish Church appear, with very few exceptions, to have been prepared with great care, and were so prepared at a time when his mind was stored with information on all the topics which he had occasion to introduce. They had also the benefit of some revision so late as the year 1843. In that year a portion of them was redelivered from the Church History Chair of the University of Edinburgh, then temporarily supplied for his friend and colleague Professor Robertson.”



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