Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE NURSING REGISTER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is stated in the annotation under this heading in your issue for March 22nd that the Central Committee for State Registration will not consider the proposal that any scheme for State registration should include nurses who have special hospital training only. I desire to point out that the writer of the annotation has apparently overlooked Clause 11, (1) (h) of the Central Committee's Bill, which distinctly provides for what is known as "reciprocal training." Under this clause the training in a special hospital (e.g., a children's hospital) would be allowed, subject to certain conditions, to count as part of the general training required under the Act; the clause allows, in fact, just such a scheme as is outlined by your annotator himself towards the end of his note.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

E. W. GOODALL,

Hon. Medical Secretary, Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses.

Grove Military Hospital, S.W., March 22nd, 1919.

* * Colonel Goodall's explanation of the significance of the clause in the Central Committee's Bill is a welcome confirmation of our view that the aims of the two rival Parliamentary measures should readily be reconciled. We have been asked to publish a letter addressed to an enquirer by Sir Arthur Stanley, Chairman of the College of Nursing, Limited, in which he states the attitude which the College will take towards the Nurses' Registration Bill now before the House of Commons. Sir Arthur Stanley writes:—

The Council of the College of Nursing has had this matter under its consideration, and it has decided that as the Bill affirms the principle of State recognition of the nursing profession it should, so far, be supported. I am quite aware, and so are the members of the Council, that a few of the principal supporters of the Nurses' Registration Bill have constantly misrepresented the aims and objects of the College, and have insulted those who were in any way assisting it. We hold, however, that no personal feeling should be allowed to interfere with the attainment of State registration, which means so much for nurses, and you will be glad to know that its members are sufficiently broad-minded to disregard petty personalities and to work with a single mind for the good of the nursing profession. ED. L.

CULTIVATION OF A FILTER-PASSING ORGANISM IN INFLUENZA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—To avoid the possibility of misunderstanding, I desire to amplify a perhaps obscure paragraph in my obituary notice of the late Major H. G. Gibson, R.A.M.C., published in your issue of March 8th. Referring to the cultivation, by the Noguchi technique, of a minute filter-passing coccus, I stated that the independent findings of Majors Gibson and Bowman and Captain Connor had been confirmed by the work of Captain J. A. Wilson, R.A.M.C., a note on which was published by Sir John Rose Bradford, Captain E. F. Bashford, and Captain J. A. Wilson in THE LANCET and the *British Medical Journal* of Feb. 1st. This paragraph, though intended merely to show that similar findings, mutually confirmatory, had been arrived at independently by two groups of investigators, has been construed as an implication that priority was claimed by me for Majors Gibson and Bowman and Captain Connor. No such implication was intended. Though Captain Wilson's work was not considered by Sir John Rose Bradford to be sufficiently complete to justify publication until the latter part of January, 1919, this officer had been successful in making "Noguchi" cultures of what appears to have been the same organism some months before this was done by Gibson, Bowman, and Connor.

At the same time full credit for independent and original work must be given to the latter workers who were unaware that the "Noguchi" technique had already been employed in culture work in influenza. As the paragraph in question

has already given rise to misunderstanding, I hope that, in justice to Captain J. A. Wilson, this letter may be given early publicity.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

S. L. CUMMINS,

Colonel, A.M.S.; Adviser in Pathology.
B.E.F., France.

March 19th, 1919.

THE COPPER TREATMENT OF LUPUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. H. J. Gauvain and Dr. H. A. Ellis are to be congratulated upon the successful results they have obtained with brass paste in the treatment of cutaneous tuberculosis.¹ In my paper upon the subject, read before the Brighton meeting of the British Medical Association in 1913, I pointed out the hopefulness of the copper method in cases of lupus vulgaris.² I then employed copper-potassium tartrate, in the form of Fehling's solution, injecting hypodermically, directly into the lupoid tissue, from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 c.cm. of a 1 per cent. solution, or, as an alternative, copper chloride was used in the same strength. Some slight local reaction was observed, but three days later the lupoid nodules were seen to be paler and flatter, and ultimately to become necrotic. If the brass preparations will prove to be so completely selective in their action, without any destructive effect upon healthy tissue, a valuable remedy will indeed have been found. It will be interesting to observe the effect of these newer combinations of copper upon lupus of the mucous membranes.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

G. NORMAN MEACHEN, M.D., M.R.C.P.

Braintree, March 20th, 1919.

ABSENCE OF CANCER IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson has returned from his expedition to the Arctic and has written to me from Alaska to state that cancer does not exist among the Esquimos. He kindly undertook this investigation at my request when he left in 1914. Previous to this Sir W. MacGregor, Dr. W. T. Grenfell, Mr. Frank Bezley, and more recently Rear Admiral Peary, have all told me that they had never seen a case of cancer among the native tribes of the Far North; and it was their observations which prompted me to ask Mr. Stefansson on the eve of his departure in 1914 to make a special investigation. Mr. Stefansson also sends opinions to the same effect from Dr. Grafton Burke and the late Dr. George Howe, who worked for years on the Yukon River. It may be remembered that Panum half a century ago remarked that the disease was either extremely rare or did not exist in Iceland and South Greenland.

I think therefore we may safely assume that cancer does not exist in the Arctic. It is a point of great importance to cancer research, for it has been generally accepted that the disease is ubiquitous. This evidently is not the case, and the question now arises as to how far this new fact may alter our conceptions as to the causes of the disease. It seems to me that the absence of cancer in the Arctic can only have one of three explanations—racial, dietetic, or climatic. The Esquimos were originally Asiatics like all the Indians of the American Continents, and there is no reason to suppose any physical or physiological difference which will exempt them from cancer. Moreover, Panum's observations were on Europeans—Norwegians and Danes. Dietetically the Esquimos are enormous meat-eaters, but until 20 years ago did not have vegetables; otherwise their food does not differ from that of other natives, and Panum's observations again negative a dietetic explanation. The climatic explanation seems the best, for the climate of the Arctic differs from any other part of the inhabited globe; but it revives the parasitic theory. The cold is so intense that saprophytic organisms cannot exist. Nothing putrefies if left in the open. While contagious diseases (venereal, &c.) are common, diseases which are contracted from the general atmosphere, such as a "cold," are unknown. It would appear, therefore, that cancer may come into a similar category, and that part at least of the cause of it is due to an organism which invades the body from without, which is air-borne in part of its life-history, and which cannot exist in the Arctic climate.

¹ THE LANCET, March 15th, 1919.

² Brit. Med. Jour., 1913, ii., 1003.