Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

MICROCYTHÆMIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The current number of the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science* contains an abstract of a memoir published last year by Profs. Vanlair and Masius, of Liege, "On a Morbid Condition of the Blood hitherto undescribed," consisting in the presence of a number of spherical, highly refractile, red-coloured bodies, in addition to, and to a great extent replacing, the ordinary red corpuscles. These bodies, from their small size (their diameter being rather more than half that of the red discs), are called "microcytes," and the condition of blood in which they exist is styled "microcythæmia." For fuller details as to the character of these bodies, and for the history of the case in which this condition of the blood existed, I must refer your readers to the journal in question. It is sufficient to state that improvement in health was accompanied by a marked diminution in the number of "microcytes" till finally none remained.

In April of the present year a female patient, the subject of Addison's disease, was readmitted into the Middlesex Hospital, under the care of Dr. Greenhow, suffering from extreme prostration consequent upon a slight injury she had received on the forehead. Examination of her blood while she was still in this condition yielded the following results:—Very few red corpuscles were present, and these not forming rouleaux, but occurring scattered singly over the field; a large number of globular, highly refractive nuclei of a red colour, measuring about $\frac{1}{4500}$ of an inch on an average, mostly isolated, but here and there occurring in considerable groups; no marked diminution or excess in the number of white corpuscles. As the patient increased in strength the number of these bodies diminished, and at the same time the tendency of the red discs to form rouleaux became restored, so that on her leaving the hospital at the end of about three weeks, her blood presented almost a normal appearance.

At the time no satisfactory explanation of the condition of the blood could be offered. The observations of Dr. Braxton Hicks on pathological changes in the red corpuscles* suggested the possible derivation of these "nuclei" from pre-existing red corpuscles, being the separated "zoid" element of Brücke. But then no corpuscle was seen in the act of breaking up, and the "œcoid" constituents were nowhere visible. That it was a condition not special to Addison's disease was soon proved by its occurrence (although to a far less marked extent) in a case of simple debility and anæmia, and in one of constitutional syphilis. The publication of this memoir seems, however, to offer a satisfactory solution to the question, or at any rate suggests the identity between the bodies found in the blood in these cases with the "microcytes" occurring in "microcythæmia."

My object in writing this has been, not to criticise the hypothesis framed by the Liege professors to account for the production of the "microcythæmic" state, but simply to draw attention to the fact of the existence of such a condition, in the hope that it may lead to some further light being thrown upon the minute pathology of the blood. Apologising for trespassing thus on your valuable space,

I remain yours truly,

Middlesex Hospital, July 22nd, 1872.

SIDNEY COUPLAND.

MR. HOLMES ON ANEURISM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the last of the admirable lectures "On the Surgical Treatment of Aneurism," delivered by Mr. Holmes at the Royal College of Surgeons, published in THE LANCET of the 27th inst., he has been good enough to refer to my case of aortic aneurism, in which Mr. Heath tied the left common carotid artery. It appears to me, however, that

* Quart. Journ. Micr. Sc., April, 1872.

the case does not stand out with the prominence that was claimed for it at the Clinical Society.

It is, I believe, the first instance in which the left carotid artery was ever tied with premeditation, with the direct intent of arresting the increase of pure aortic aneurism diagnosed as such, the other cases cited by the accomplished lecturer being those in which aortic aneurism was only discovered on post-mortem examination.

I am Sir, yours obediently,

Suffolk-place, July 29th, 1872.

J. COCKLE, M.D.

COTTAGE HOSPITAL FOR MANSFIELD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With reference to your most excellent remarks in last week's LANCET on the above subject, perhaps a few words from a resident practitioner may not be undesirable. The want of a local hospital has been much felt for a long time, and some years since my friend, Mr. Walter Whitehead, of Manchester (then resident at Mansfield Woodhouse), utilised two cottages there temporarily with the ultimate intention of building an hospital for the district. The plan has worked well, and last year we received fifty cases into this temporary hospital, each patient being attended by his own medical man, aided by an efficient resident nurse. We have now a considerable fund in hand and promised for a building fund, and I do not doubt that we shall succeed in obtaining funds enough to build and subscriptions enough to maintain a suitable erection for our populous and increasing neighbourhood.

As regards the dispensary, you will be glad to hear that a provident institution of that class is now in full work here, any proper applicant being admitted on payment of one penny a week, or twopence for a man, his wife, and all his children under thirteen years of age, each member being allowed to elect his own medical attendant annually.

I trust, therefore, that you will see, Sir, that Mansfield is trying to "run alone," and that the profession here are not behindhand in their endeavours to establish institutions for the welfare of the neighbourhood and the efficient treatment of disease among the poor.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Mansfield, July 29th, 1872.

G. WHITEFIELD SPARKE.

MR. JOHN HAMILTON'S TITLES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—On reading your comments upon this case, I perceive you are evidently under the impression that it will be submitted to a higher tribunal. Now it is very doubtful whether such will be the case. When I undertook the prosecution of Hamilton, I did not anticipate that the defendant would refuse to abide by the magistrate's decision; and, as I am not a rich man, I have no funds for the purpose of carrying this case to a higher court. So, unless the profession will subscribe the necessary funds for retaining counsel to uphold the law in this case henceforth, any person can adopt what medical titles he pleases, and with impunity, as, although there is a Medical Act under which he can be punished, there is no one who will put the law in force against him.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY P. CHANDLER, M.R.C.S.

Berners-street, Oxford-street, W., July 29th, 1872.

BIRMINGHAM.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE immediate sequestration of the funds of the Corporation of Birmingham, which has been so urgently pressed for in the Court of Chancery by Sir Charles Adlerley and the Gravelly-hill relators, is not to take place. Vice-Chancellor Bacon has postponed the issue of his order until the middle of November, and has also indicated what steps may be taken to prevent the order being made absolute at that date. Removal of the accumulation of sewage