Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

ON SYPHONAGE IN THE LARGE INTESTINE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I point out to Dr. R. W. Leftwich that experiments worked out with a syphon of garden hose with glass insertions and treacle, fully described in his book, "prove" nothing as regards the action of the human colon and do not justify the treatment of patients as syphons. Before placing his patients in the upright posture to secure a syphonage effect he must first render the contents of the great intestine "capable of flowing" (which will be necessary in over 90 per cent. of cases); he must render the walls of the colon rigid, which can be done only by producing a negative pressure in the abdominal cavity, which can be done by inverting the patient. Rigidity cannot be produced by either the longitudinal or circular coat of the colon, the one shortens the bowel, the other diminishes its calibre, but neither can act in the opposite way, as Dr. Leftwich believes it can. A negative pressure in the cæcum is a product of Dr. Leftwich's imagination. The muscular coats are, as I have already shown, more than sufficient to propel the contents of the colon and readily hypertrophy when there is a localised obstruction to be overcome. As for the "daily morning evacuation" being the result of syphonage, how does Dr. Leftwich account for the fact that most domestic animals (especially noticeable amongst cows) always evacuate when they rise from a period of rest?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 23rd, 1904.

ARTHUR KEITH.

BILHARZIA HÆMATOBIA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—*Re bilharzia hæmatobia*, as I have been practising here for the last ten or 12 years and have necessarily, therefore, come in contact with very many cases of the above I take the liberty of answering Mr. E. H. Worth's question as regards treatment published in THE LANCET of Feb. 27th (p. 611). My experience leads me to believe that treatment has very little, if any, effect upon the course of the disease which in temperate persons is almost invariably mild and favourable. Iron alum is, I think, the best iron preparation if the hæmaturia is excessive, or the *tinctura ferri perchloridi*, while for the burning at the meatus during micturition my favourite drug is potassium citrate, which also presumably assists in preventing the formation of calculi. These last are occasionally a troublesome complication but are, in my experience, invariably of small size and are only brought under the notice of the practitioner by becoming impacted in the urethra or by causing an attack of renal colic.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

F. T. AUDEN, M.D. Edin.

Rustenburg, Transvaal, March 26th, 1904.

A PROBABLE FRACTURE OF THE BASE OF THE SKULL WITH RECOVERY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The following case may be of some interest. The accident occurred to a friend of mine who was coasting down a steep hill on his bicycle when, owing to a sudden swerve while he was going very fast, he collided with a wooden fence, completely injuring the front wheel and forks and also receiving a cut over the right parietal eminence from which there was considerable hæmorrhage. He was slightly unconscious for a few moments but managed with slight assistance to walk afterwards. Later there were some hæmorrhage from the right external meatus and considerable pain about the right tympanum when coughing or blowing his nose, also complete loss of hearing by the right ear and a considerable amount of blood came from the nose when it was blown. This condition continued for about 12 hours and then the hæmorrhage ceased but for three days the patient was quite deaf on the right side and still had pain about the right tympanum and a

hissing noise when he blew his nose. When walking on the fourth day he noticed a slight creaking noise about his right ear. This disappeared after a while and his hearing after a week was much improved. He was never laid up.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 23rd, 1904.

AJAX.

THE VISION OF MYOPES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With reference to the correspondence on the above subject which appeared in THE LANCET during October, 1903, when some methods of temporarily improving the vision of myopes were discussed, I beg to call attention to a little dodge which I have discovered with the same object. In the centre of my watch glass there is a little plano-concave disc with which many watch glasses are made and I find that by opening the glass of the watch and looking through this little concave portion it acts as a lens especially suitable to the myopic eye. Of course, this is merely an emergency dodge, but it is far better than making two pin-holes in a piece of paper or cardboard to get a binocular effect or looking into a small convex mirror wherein, although objects are clearly reflected to the myopic eye, the reversal of words on shop fronts, and so forth, is especially noticeable.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

London, April 27th, 1904.

MYOPE.

THE GERMAN SURGICAL CONGRESS.¹

(FROM OUR BERLIN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE German Surgical Congress met in Berlin from April 6th to 9th, Professor BRAUN of Göttingen being in the chair. After the conclusion of the introductory proceedings Professor Braun made a sympathetic allusion to the eight deceased members and especially to Professor Gussenbauer of Vienna, the president of the Congress held in 1901. The Librarian (Professor FISCHER) reported that the new catalogue was now at the disposal of the members and on sale, the library containing 3756 books, 2254 volumes of journals, and 8862 reprints of articles.

Operations on the Blood-vessels.

Professor KÖRTE (Berlin) showed a boy, 13 years of age, who as a sequel to a knife wound suffered from an arterio-venous aneurysm of the popliteal vessels. Professor Körte under Esmarch's ischæmia cut down on the tumour, broke down the adhesions, and sutured the wounds of the vessels. Primary union and complete cure were obtained.

Dr. RIESE (Britz) reported a similar case of aneurysm in a boy, aged 11 years, where a piece of bone two inches long was found in the wound of the popliteal artery.

Carcinoma.

Professor PETERSEN (Heidelberg) reported some cases of late relapses of cancer. In a case of cancer of the tongue operated on by the thermo-cautery a relapse appeared after 19 years and was treated a second time by the same procedure; no enlargement of the glands was present on either occasion. In another instance of cancer of the mamma where radical extirpation had been performed in 1889, local relapses were observed every third year and operated on, so that five operations—the last one in 1903—took place. At present the woman was in good health.

Dr. PERTHES (Leipsic) read a paper on the treatment of cancrroids by the Roentgen rays. In 12 out of 13 cases a complete cure, and in the last one a considerable improvement, was obtained. As the majority of the cases were of comparatively recent date there might possibly be relapses. In three cases of cancrroid of the lips the result was favourable, in other instances unfavourable, and so were some cases of cancer of the mamma. Dr. Perthes explained that the action of the rays was somewhat superficial—namely, only for a depth of about an inch. He was of opinion that the rays might have a specific action on the carcinomatous tissue, their influence on the metastatic glands being obvious.

¹ For this report we wish to tender our thanks to the editor of the *Deutsche Medicinische Wochenschrift*, through whose courtesy it has been forwarded to us by our correspondent.—ED. L.