Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

"A FIRST SERIES OF FIFTY OVARIOTOMIES: A PLEA FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF OVARIOTOMY BY OBSTETRIC PHYSICIANS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The very interesting paper on the above subject by Dr. H. R. Spencer, read before the Medical Society and published in THE LANCET of Dec. 16th, opens with the following statement: "To University College Hospital, where ovariectomy has been performed by the obstetric physicians for twenty years, the obstetric physicians of London owe a debt of gratitude, for it is mainly due to the success of my master, Dr. John Williams, that the practice of allowing obstetricians to operate has spread to other general hospitals." Regard for the memory of my friend Tyler Smith compels me to vindicate his title to the merit of asserting the right of gynaecologists to do their own work. When St. Mary's Hospital was founded more than forty years ago Tyler Smith took office on the condition—then, I believe, asserted for the first time—that he should operate. His example determined my course of action. It was partly because the surgeons of St. Thomas's Hospital objected to my performing ovariectomy there that I accepted the invitation from my *alma mater*, St. George's Hospital, to return as obstetric physician with the understanding that I should operate. A special room was adapted for the purpose. This was in January, 1875. One significant event followed: my successor at St. Thomas's Hospital was permitted to operate. Here, then, is a list of three hospitals in which the obstetric physicians were emancipated. In this connexion it is due to Dr. John Williams and Dr. Champneys to recall that remarkable manifesto against pelvic operations by obstetric physicians which was published in THE LANCET of Feb. 14th, 1891.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Dec. 20th, 1893.

ROBERT BARNES.

A CASE OF SYMMETRICAL HERPES ATTACKING THE EARS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The following case is of interest, as the herpes occurred on both ears at the same time and was associated with an attack of influenza. A boy aged fourteen years attended at the Victoria Hospital on Dec. 7th. He stated that he had had influenza but a few days previously, and on admission complained of eruption on the ears. Both ears were the seat of a herpetiform eruption, the right being the worse of the two; of the latter, the helix, antihelix, and antitragus were affected, with the intervening fossæ; on the left ear only the upper part of the helix and its fossa were involved. The eruption consisted of discrete vesicles containing a sero-purulent fluid and seated on an inflamed base. The boy gave a history of having had a similar affection on the right ear every autumn for the last four or five years and stated that last year the left ear was attacked at the same time, but not so badly as the right ear. There were no physical signs in the heart or lungs, and ten days later he was quite well, a mixture of quinine and iron having been administered during that time.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

LEWIS G. GLOVER,
House Physician, Victoria Hospital.

Dec. 24th, 1893.

"THE TOLERANCE OF THE INDIAN BLADDER."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With reference to Mr. Buckston Browne's paper in THE LANCET of Oct. 7th last, commenting on Dr. Keith's paper in your issue of Sept. 30th last, I may be allowed to notice first his insinuation, whatever it may mean, concerning the "immense tolerance of the Indian bladder." People now come from all parts of Sindh to have their calculi removed by Dr. Keith at Hyderabad. If you ask them why they come such long distances they tell you at once because they have

heard that he removes their calculi by the "injin," and that there is a very small mortality following his operations. The records of the hospital show the number of cases of stone in the bladder for thirty-two years before he took charge of the hospital to be 2423, the average number per annum being 75.7 (the average given in Dr. Keith's first paper being a clerical error). During the present year, from Jan. 1st, he has performed 566 lithotrities. On children and boys under 15 he has performed 410 lithotrities in succession without a death, and the number is still increasing. This success is unprecedented; and will Mr. Browne attribute it to the "immense tolerance of the Indian bladder"? If he does he makes a great mistake, for this immense tolerance apparently exists mostly in the Sindh bladders, which Dr. Keith has specially to deal with. No one versed in the literature of stone in the bladder could fail to comprehend the absolute difference which exists between Dr. Keith's and Dr. Dolbeau's operations. The only thing in common is the name.

If Mr. Buckston Browne had quoted the Latin phrase, and said that a lithotome was described and brought prominently before the profession by Dr. N. R. Smith of Baltimore, he would have been quite as near the mark, for Dr. Smith's lithotome bears as great a resemblance to that of Dr. Keith's as Dr. Dolbeau's cassepiere and his ingenious instrument for dilating the prostate do to Dr. Keith's perineal or Sir Henry Thompson's urethral lithotrites, the only instruments with which Dr. Keith performs all his operations. Again, if Mr. Buckston Browne had compared the two operations he would have seen as great a difference in the results as in the mode of performance. Dr. Dolbeau had 33 operations with 5 deaths, whereas Dr. Keith has had 167 operations with only 3 deaths. No surgeon who has carefully studied the minute description of the prostate gland given by Dr. Heule in his "Handbuch der Anatomie des Menschen" can fail to recognise the great importance of this organ in the genito-urinary economy. Dr. Keith, therefore, justly deprecates any interference with the prostatic portion of the urethral canal; and the theory of his operation, which he has practised so well—viz., to remove the largest stones from the bladder without interfering with either its structure or function or with that of the prostate gland is, whatever Mr. Buckston Browne may say to the contrary, *new* in the annals of surgery. With regard to Mr. Buckston Browne's papers Dr. Keith has simply related his experiences as he has done his, and he has now performed altogether 1316 lithotrities without once meeting with any of the wonderful pathological rarities so graphically described by Mr. Buckston Browne; but this may be attributed to another peculiarity of the Indian bladder. As regards those who are regularly employed in removing calculi from men, women, and children of all ages, Mr. Buckston Browne must agree with me that Dr. Keith has performed more operations within a given time and with greater success (whatever that success may be attributed to) than any other surgeon living or dead.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

THOS. H. AQUINO,
Assistant Surgeon, Civil Hospital; Teacher, Medical
School, Hyderabad, Sind.

Hyderabad, Sind, Nov. 29th, 1893.

"SNAKE-BITE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In answer to "Carbo-Rivulus," Dr. Mueller advises in all urgent cases one-sixth and in milder ones one-twelfth of a grain of strychnine to be injected every half-hour until the effects of the snake poison are completely removed; and as I have used the antidote in several bad cases I quite agree with him that it is perfectly safe. In my own practice I always used the liquor strychniæ of the British Pharmacopœia, commencing with fifteen minims. In one very severe case, in which the patient was brought to me having been bitten by a black snake with a red belly, I found him collapsed and cyanosed (dead, as his friends said). I commenced with fifteen minims of the liquor strychniæ and twenty minutes afterwards injected a similar amount, both near the bite. Forty minutes afterwards I injected twenty minims of the liquor strychniæ into his left arm. The third injection dispelled all sleep symptoms and depression, and the patient expressed a wish to walk about and said he was all right. One hour afterwards drowsiness again set in and became very marked—in fact, the patient would sleep in any position—so I again injected fifteen minims of the liquor strychniæ—and now noticed for the first time some muscular