being more lightly packed, and hence a more perfect vacuum is obtained. 4, The provision of means for exhausting and subsequently washing out the cyst, without the necessity for removing the needle. 5. The syringe and needles are exquisitely fitted and finished.

The result of our examination of this aspirator is that we cordially recommend it to our professional brethren, and especially to hospitals.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE MICROGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As you remark in your able review of this week's LANCET that this is the age of expostulations, I trust you will permit me to expostulate with, and at the same time thank, the reviewer of those numbers of the *Micrographical Dictionary* which have been published under my editorship. He considers that my description of the minute structures of the liver is antiquated, and that I have ignored Eberth, Frey and others. Now, in the bibliography at the end of the article it is written "Ewald Hering in Stricker, Histol. New Syd. Soc. vol. ii., and the authorities mentioned therein." Both Eberth and Frey, and many others, are noticed in Hering's essay (page 19), and their opinions, contradictory enough on some points, are noticed in my brief summary. After alluding to the opinion held by some histologists that the biliary ducts end in cæcal extremities, I wrote (page 465) "but this arrangement is stoutly denied by others, who consider that the minute hepatic cell-tubules open into them." Again (page 466), "The secreting cells of the tubules fill up the interspaces between the bloodvessels, forming a network with radiating meshes." "It is still an open question whether or not these cells are united serially within a structureless membrana propria, forming the so-called hepatic tubules through which the bile passes to the ducts." Eberth originated the affirmative of this point, and I do not feel satisfactorily impressed with the results of any investigations which have been made to settle this question, and I affirm that the histology of the hepatic cells and ultimate biliary structures can only be summarised as above, with truth.

The reviewer then states that I have neglected to mention the epithelium of the air cells; and he quotes my assertion that the "rest of their (capillaries) wall is free and in contact with the air of the cells." On the page which precedes that containing the above quotation there is not only a *description of the epithelium of the air cells but also a woodcut*, of no great beauty it is true, but about as true as most are. Now, I have lived long enough to have remembered some very dogmatic teaching regarding this epithelium and its absence, and respecting its relation to the capillaries; and as editor of a work which is intended to be read by all classes of microscopists I could not dogmatise on a point which is still, in spite of nitrate of silver, &c., not quite settled. The existence of an epithelial lining to the air cells, denied as it was by men of the first class, is proved, and was proved long before nitrate of silver injections were heard of. An uninterrupted epithelium, uniform in its character, is asserted to exist by some most distinguished histologists and denied by others. Thus, F. E. Schulze discredits the uniformity, and insists that the epithelium in some parts is a homogeneous structure, with polygonal markings; while J. Arnold Hertz and your humble servant admit an interrupted epithelium.

On such a point, therefore, it is hardly fair to criticize at all. I believe that by leaving the question open I have performed my duty.

The reviewer then incites me to remonstrate upon his rather strong language regarding the "bibliography" which is attached to nearly every one of the *thousands* of articles in the Dictionary. He accuses me of gross carelessness because old editions of works instead of new ones are allowed to remain. Now this procedure was intentional, and quite as much so as the omission of many works on nearly every subject. The bibliography is intended to place the reader in possession of the authorities whence the statements in the articles have been derived, and to afford the opportunity for obtaining increased information. If the truth is contained in an old book,

why not let the edition remain? There is no gross carelessness, but a desire to refer back to authority. An imperfect list of authors is only possible in a work like this, for a more perfect one would occupy more space than the rest of the letter-press. I am obliged to the reviewer for his corrections in the matter of names, and I shall feel grateful for the reception of any errata from any one else.—Yours, &c.,

P. MARTIN DUNCAN, F.R.S.,

Editor of the Micrographical Dictionary.

Lee, S.E., Nov. 25, 1874.

SANITATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your last week's number, under the head "Sanitary Notes," you comment on what purports to be the report of a speech made by me at a meeting of the Town Council of Barnstaple. From that very imperfect report, it would appear that I doubted the efficacy of good drainage in preventing the spread of fever. Now, no one sets a higher value than I do on good drainage, coupled with an abundant supply of pure water, as a preventive of the spread of infectious fevers, as by these means the infectious germs which find their way into the sewers become largely diluted, and are rapidly carried away beyond the area of the population.

There can be no better example of the benefits conferred by good drainage and a good water-supply than this town, which was formerly subjected to frequently recurring epidemics of fever, but which since the improvement in the drainage and water-supply, has been singularly exempt, not only from typhoid, but also from diphtheria and other infectious fevers; sporadic cases only having occurred at distant intervals. My remarks at the Town Council meeting applied to the imperfect drainage of a part of Pilton, a suburb of Barnstaple, where typhoid has recently broken out, and not for the first time, and where the sewage is discharged into a long open gutter, in a field, terminating in an open cesspit of large dimensions.

I certainly laid great stress upon the necessity of disinfecting the discharges proceeding from the sick, as a long experience has proved to me their inestimable value in checking the spread of infectious fevers, more especially in the dwellings of the poor, and in ill-constructed houses of the wealthier classes in rural districts, where the human excreta are often not carried far from the dwellings in which they were cast off.

It is, perhaps, under such circumstances, where the ravages of fever are often relatively much greater than in towns, that the efficacy of disinfectants will be most apparent.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Dec. 1st, 1874.

RICHARD BUDD.

THE NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A question, on the issue of which depends much of the future stability of the Naval Medical Service, is now forming the topic of discussion whenever two or more of the department meet. They ask, What object can the Admiralty have in view, in pursuing the present course, in regard to cabin accommodation provided for medical officers in H.M. ships?

Their Lordships must be fully aware what importance has always been attached to this question by the profession, so much so that in 1855 it was brought before the notice of the House of Commons, with a most beneficial result, as far as the junior medical officers were concerned. It was afterwards considered advisable, to allay all further irritation, that cabins should be allotted on an intelligible basis. Accordingly we find that in 1866 a recommendation emanated from a Committee, of which the present First Sea Lord was president: "That in regard to cabins, while the requirements of the service render it necessary that the senior executive officers and the staff commander or master should have the cabins placed most advantageously for their special duties, medical officers should *after them* have cabins more in accordance with their relative rank in the service." The Admiralty, acting on this recommendation, issued orders in conformity therewith; and about this time a large influx of medical officers took place. But like all warrants and regu-