Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

CASE-TAKING IN CHOLERA CASES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—We have been reproached, and I am one of those who think with some show of reason, with an indisposition to submit ourselves and our researches to the tests and modes of verification applicable to scientific inquiries in general, and with pursuing our calling rather as an art in which it is given only to individuals to excel, than as a science which should ensure us the public confidence which we expect, and the State honours which we think are our due. Is there any truth in this reproach? If there is not, we may safely disregard it; if there is, it would be in the highest degree impolitic to shut our eyes to it. We have been told that the public do not trust us. Let us examine that assertion by the light of a fact which stares us in the face. We are, for the third time within a comparatively few years, threatened with cholera. Is the public to understand that each one of us proposes to deal with the disease in his own way and with the same result as before? If so I can understand its disinclination to trust us. The public, depend upon it, wishes to regard us as a great and important body, and not, as we persist in making ourselves, a disjointed community without the elements of cohesion or the means of collective action. At this moment it is looking to us to bring together and to use all our scattered resources in its behalf. Are we prepared to do so? and if so, in what way?

In 1848 I saw my share of cholera, and felt my helplessness much in the same degree as other people. All was confusion. If I looked to the heads of our profession, or to the great centres of experience, the hospitals and medical charities of the metropolis, I found there the same confusion that reigned elsewhere. Not only was each hospital, but each member of the medical staff of each hospital, treating the disease from different points of view; and I could perceive no organization whatever by which the collective experience gained there could be turned to the advantage of the profession at large, or the public without. This has been questioned; but, in the sense in which I write it, and in which I have written of it, it is true.

I trust, if for no more elevated reason than that the interest of our profession is involved, that cholera will not again be allowed to come and go unquestioned and without adding something to our knowledge of its nature. I trust that, on this occasion, either the Government will appoint a medical Commission to investigate the disease on a basis common to scientific inquiries in general, or that the medical profession itself will combine its action and agree upon some uniform plan of observing it. I forbear to repeat in detail the suggestions which I made on this head in 1848, and shall consider that I have not written in vain if, by any combinations our scientific men may agree to, the public can be satisfied that we have been able to elicit new facts as to the pathology of the disease and some settled principles on which to treat it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sloane-street, Oct. 1865.

F. SEYMOUR HADEN, F.R.C.S.

LIEBIG'S EXTRACT OF MEAT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At the conclusion of a letter to your journal on the 8th of July, Dr. Hassall makes the following statements:—"Since writing the foregoing letter I have met with samples denominated 'Liebig's Extract of Meat' largely adulterated with salt. This addition, since about 14s. per pound is charged for the article, and since it detracts from its value in several respects, cannot be too strongly condemned."

It may be said that there hardly exists an article of consumption more exposed to adulteration than the Extractum Carnis, on account of its high price, as well as of the difficulty which its examination, as to quality, presents even to the practised chemist, if not previously well acquainted with the subject. The public being still less able to judge of the genuine-

ness of the article, it becomes a duty to all interested in the cause, to assist in controlling, as much as possible, its public sale.

With this view, and in consequence of the above statement by Dr. Hassall, samples were bought from all such London firms as had obtained South American extract from Antwerp, (through persons unknown to them,) and carefully examined.

To prove an addition of salt, it sufficed to determine the percentage of ash in the extract.

The unadulterated Extractum Carnis leaves 21.6 to 22 per cent. of ash; if adulterated with salt, the amount of ash would be found higher.

The extract taken from the following firms contained

	Per-centage of ash.
Van Abbott	21.7
Allen and Hanburys	22.2
Wm. Hooper... ..	22.1
Foster... ..	21.7
Savory and Moore	21.6
Leo Lee	21.7

These results of analysis prove that Dr. Hassall's statement does not apply to the above firms, and the duty devolves upon him to name the place where he found the Extractum Carnis "largely adulterated with salt."

In conclusion, I may be permitted to observe that neither Dr. Hassall's analysis of the ash of the extract, nor the rest of his numerical statements, seem to deserve much credit, and that the substance he examined *could certainly not have been South American Extractum Carnis*.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Munich, Oct. 13th, 1865.

JUSTUS LIEBIG.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having strongly felt from the first introduction of the Extract of Meat that its nutritive properties could not be equivalent to those of the meat from which it was made, we were surprised to find our name quoted as having promulgated a contrary view.

Our label states that "*half an ounce contains the soluble matter of fifteen ounces of meat, free from fat.*" And we regret that a less cautious mode of expression was inadvertently employed in the advertisement which appeared in your columns.*

The directions on our label, "*2½ drams, (a small teaspoonful), dissolved in half a pint of hot water, will form a strong and nutritious broth—salt and pepper should be added,*" are, we think, fully borne out by the statement in the Bavarian Pharmacopoeia, of which the following is a translation:—

Extractum Carnis.—A brown extract having the smell and taste of roast meat, a dram of which, with four ounces of hot water and half a dram of common salt, affords a transparent, brown solution, which may be used as an agreeable-tasting, very strengthening meat-broth.

We cannot but regard the introduction to this country of the extract as likely to prove of great importance, especially in connexion with the present deficient supply of meat. But it is for Baron von Liebig and the students of physiological chemistry to explain the absolute value of a nutriment containing the peculiar and characteristic elements of animal, as distinguished from vegetable food.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

ALLEN AND HANBURYS.

Plough-court, Lombard-street, Oct. 1865.

EPIDEMIC INFLUENCE OF TERRESTRIAL MAGNETISM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A magnetic storm may be looked upon as a fitting prelude to the march of cholera. Both are at present mysterious; we know them only by their effects. Time may, and will most probably, unravel the mystery of each, as we are now on their track. Terrestrial magnetism has its unravellers in the many eminent persons engaged in observing its effects; cholera may be one of its effects when in a condition of activity. I have a magnetic apparatus, very simple in its construction, which indicated to me the late magnetic storm. For the present this storm has much calmed down, though for many

* The exact words being, "The extract represents thirty times its weight of meat."