

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

FREEZING TISSUES, FOR SECTION-CUTTING,
BY MEANS OF ETHER SPRAY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The valuable and interesting communication by Dr. Shingleton Smith, in the columns of your last issue, on the subject of section-cutting, after freezing of the tissue by means of ether spray, induces me to offer a few brief remarks, embodying my own opinion and conclusions respecting the value of this freezing agent.

I have no doubt that for those possessed of the needful dexterity the method of procedure indicated by Dr. Shingleton Smith will be found highly successful. But my personal experience of the use of ether spray in section-cutting is drawn from the performance of an instrument recently devised by my colleague, Mr. Bevan Lewis. The instrument in question will be found described by Mr. Lewis in the *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology* for April, 1877. It is eminently simple in construction, and is, in fact, an ingenious adaptation of the ordinary screw microtome. The tissue to be cut is frozen by means of ether spray, but the spray is directed not upon the tissue itself, but upon the under surface of the plate of the microtome on which the tissue is placed. The freezing, then, is effected *through* the metallic plate, and the ether, condensing, is carried away, as it falls, into a special receptacle, and is not, therefore, wasted. In the case of brain-tissue the object is frozen in a few seconds, and large sections are cut with remarkable ease and rapidity.

For my own part, having watched carefully Mr. Lewis's results, I must express my belief, in accordance with the opinion of Dr. Shingleton Smith, that we have in ether spray a most valuable agent in histology, one which possesses great advantages over other methods of hardening, and one which, I cannot doubt, will soon be largely used. And I say this with some natural prejudice in favour of the chromic acid compounds, *et hoc genus omne*, which has done such long and good service to the cause of histology.

So far, unfortunately, the ether spray microtome has not advanced beyond the stage of the working model at present in use here, but it is now being made by Mr. Gardener, instrument maker, of Edinburgh, and, as I trust, with a satisfactory result.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HERBERT C. MAJOR.

West Riding Asylum, Wakefield, April 30th, 1878.

REGISTRATION OF FOREIGNERS WITHOUT
DIPLOMAS OR QUALIFICATIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR.—May I crave a little space in your columns to draw the attention of the profession and of yourself to what I cannot but think you will consider a most unnecessary and dangerous clause in the Government Medical Bill (but one which has hitherto received little notice), and to the action of the General Medical Council upon it. I refer to Clause 8, which provides that the General Medical Council shall have the power to place upon the Medical Register the name of any foreign practitioner of "eminent professional acquirements and character," whether or not he possess any diploma or qualification. When this clause came before the Council, and Mr. Simon proposed that it be approved, Dr. Haldane, seeing it involved a principle, opposed it. As he said, it would admit to the Register in this country foreign practitioners who had no diplomas in their own country. Mr. Simon, in reply, confessed that such would be the effect, but contended that such an effect was a desirable and proper one. He said that "every now and then there would be a man who had not got a recognised diploma, but of whom the Council knew personally that he had been for a great many years in practice in a place which did not diplomatised, and that he held no diploma; and, further, he might have contributed for many years valuable papers on medical science, and after spending a long period in this way abroad, he might come to England. The proposal was that the Council should have power to consider the merits of such a man per-

sonally, irrespectively of the question of a diploma, and should be enabled to place him on the Register." Dr. Haldane's amendment not being seconded, Mr. Simon's motion was carried.

Now, Sir, I submit that a course such as that proposed is totally subversive of the very foundation of all our recent medical legislation. The main object of the Medical Act was to secure that, after its passing, no man should be enabled to gain a recognised status as a practitioner who was not in possession of some diploma or diplomas testifying to his knowledge of his profession.

No Englishman can obtain a place on the Register without such diplomas, and it is neither right, just, nor desirable that we should give to foreigners a privilege which we withhold from our own countrymen. Again, I would ask, what civilised country is there which does not "diplomatised" its legitimate medical practitioners? Surely the Council is not to be called upon to register a medical man from Central Africa or the Cannibal Islands!

I have heard it suggested that this clause has been introduced to meet the case of a special individual, "personally" known to the Council, who has been in practice for some years, but without any diplomas. I can scarcely believe that the Council would lend itself to such a bare-faced piece of jobbery and evasion of the very object for which it is appointed—viz., to ensure the proper qualification of all medical men seeking the right to practise in this country.

By all means let us be liberal to foreigners, and allow the registration of foreign diplomas of recognised value and standing, as provided for in Clause 7 of the Bill; but I see no reason to go further than this.

In conclusion, I must protest, and I think the profession should unanimously endorse the protest, against provision being made for the admission to the Medical Register of *any* person, Briton or foreigner, who is not possessed of recognised diplomas.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

W. DOUGLAS HEMMING.

Notting-hill-terrace, W., April 26th, 1878.

LEUKÆMIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As I was not present at the last meeting of the Pathological Society, perhaps you will allow me a few words in your columns on the absence of amœboid movements in the colourless corpuscles in leukæmia.

The observation which was referred to by Dr. Pye-Smith was first made by my friend Dr. Laking, some years ago, at St. George's Hospital, on the blood of a well-marked case of splenic leukæmia, and was repeated on the blood of the same subject by myself and Dr. Klein. The blood was carefully examined with the usual precautions, both at the ordinary temperature of the air (it was summer) and on the hot stage. We were able to confirm the accuracy of Dr. Laking's observation completely, the corpuscles remaining spheroidal and motionless. In this particular case, therefore, I think there can be no doubt that amœboid movements were absent. But I see that Dr. Moxon stated that Mr. Golding-Bird had found active amœboid movements in leukæmia, and that he himself had seen colourless corpuscles outside the vessels. It is plain, therefore, that further observations are necessary. May it not be that contractility becomes lost only at a certain stage of the disease? I do not think the presence of colourless corpuscles (or similar cells) outside the vessels post mortem proves actual emigration by diapedesis. They may have escaped by rupture, or may even have never been within the bloodvessels at all, as it is impossible to distinguish them from lymph-cells accumulated in perivascular lymphatics.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Upper Berkeley-street, April 27th, 1878.

JOHN CAVAFY.

PARIS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

ONE of the questions which until now had caused the greatest division of opinion amongst the Professors of the School of Medicine—I mean the creation of chairs for the teaching of "specialties"—is about to be solved. On Tuesday last, one of the professors gave me the news that