I am satisfied that the knowledge of this disease is as general in the profession as Dr. Murchison states it to be limited, and that it is unsafe to assume a want of knowledge from an absence of print. We should not admire a man of more than usual discernment one who ventured to state as novel that he had discovered some points of difference between enteric and typhus fever.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Mere, Wiltshire, October 31st, 1870.

W. NORRIS MARSHALL.

THE WORD “MICROZYMES.”

To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—In a paper “On the Intimate Pathology of Contagion,” which was published about three months ago, I proposed the word “microzyme” as a convenient general term for the first organic forms which present themselves in organic nitrogenous liquids, when about to undergo “spontaneous” decomposition.

In consequence of the interest which at present attaches to the question of the origin of disease from germs, my word has become somewhat popular, but has been used in a sense entirely different from that in which I myself proposed it. It has been used to denote the particles of which, as I have endeavoured to show, there is reason to believe that contagious matter essentially consists. I should not think it worth while to object to this misapplication, were it not calculated to lead to great confusion.

Microzymes (in the exclusive sense in which I have used the word) are often found in contagious liquids. It is undoubtedly a question for serious discussion whether or not these organic forms are identical with contagious particles; but at present there is no reason for believing either that they are or that they are not so.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Queen Anne-street, Nov. 7th, 1870.

J. BURDON-SANDERSON.

EXTIRPATION OF THE OCCUXY.

To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—My apology for disputing Dr. Nott’s claim to priority in the performance of this operation must be that the New Orleans Medical Journal is not easy of access, and that until to-day I was not aware of its existence. Under the circumstances narrated in his letter I am quite prepared to admit Dr. Nott’s claim.

Coccydynia, like all other neuralgic affections, is not always cured by operation, as I have elsewhere shown; and I can quite understand that in the hands of Sir James Simpson, as in the experience of others, both the subcutaneous operation and that of excision may have proved of only temporary benefit.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Waterloo-street, Birmingham, Nov. 9th, 1870.

LAWSON TAIT.

EDINBURGH.*

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

With returning winter comes once more the opening of the University and Medical School. At both, the inaugural addresses were delivered on Wednesday. The Principal, Sir Alexander Grant, delivered that to the University, and in it he embraced a variety of subjects, commencing first by panegyrics on the late Sir James Simpson and Mr. Syme, which were remarkable for this, that it would be difficult even for the opponents of either to find fault with the observations on their lives and characters. He alluded to the retirement of Professor Allman, and to the liberality of Sir Roderick Murchison in offering a substantial endowment for a chair of Geology. He next referred to the chair of Moral Philosophy and the lectures on Political Economy, which he regretted were still to be given by the Professor of Moral Philosophy. He congratulated the University on the offer made by the Merchant Company of Edinburgh to provide funds could be raised for keeping the Museum in all efficiency, according to the present rate of expenditure. I trust the Museum may never leave its present home, where it has been so well cared for and has reflected so great a reputation on the body that has the charge of it.

In conclusion, I believe the day for “conjoint examining boards” has passed away. More than one attempt has been made to bring about such an arrangement, but they have always failed to bear any fruit; and to those who know all the conflicting interests to be considered, the cause of such failures is not far to seek. I feel I cannot any longer trespass on your space, or there is more that I should offer in explanation and support of my suggestions, and must leave to others more competent to fill up such omissions. I know that there will be those who may read this letter who will at once say it cannot be done; it touches too many vested interests. In thirty years of pretty active life I have heard like objections made to a great many schemes that I have lived to see perfected, and far beyond what the originators could have dreamed of. But I trust those who may read this letter will excuse my temerity in presuming to treat of such a subject; and believe, in doing so, I have had but one object in view,—what I consider to be the interests of our profession.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. A. KENYON, M.B. Lond.

* This letter arrived too late for insertion in our last issue.