

CORRESPONDENCE.

ALLEGED SUPPRESSION OF DISCUSSION.

MR. ERWIN F. SMITH, of the United States Department of Agriculture, has printed a pamphlet on 'The Botanical Club Check List,' of which an abstract contributed by the author was published in the issue of SCIENCE of May 24th, pp. 587-8. In an introduction Mr. Smith writes:

"This paper was offered to the *Botanical Gazette*, passed through the hands of two of its editors, was accepted for publication and announced to appear in the June number. Subsequently it was rejected unless I would submit to have it cut down *two-thirds*. A much briefer statement of the case was previously accepted by SCIENCE, and proof sent to me, after which it was rejected as too long and too personal. Evidently every effort is being made to limit adverse criticism." * * *

An editorial article in the *Journal of Botany* (London) quotes and apparently endorses even more explicit charges of suppression of discussion. In answer to these charges the present writer sent the following letter:

"In the issue of the *Journal of Botany* for July (p. 213) you quote from a correspondent who writes: 'The journals in question will not publish articles which give a true account of what has been said against the American system in Berlin and Vienna. A notice stating the facts was sent to SCIENCE and actually put in type, but the botanical editor suppressed it.' As you state, this is a serious charge, and I venture to ask you to insert this letter denying it. Your correspondent has been misinformed, as no article on the nomenclature question has been rejected by the botanical editor of SCIENCE. The only contribution presented to SCIENCE on this subject and not accepted was an account of an extemporary discussion (partly against and partly in favor of the proposed system) following the reading of a paper before the Biological Society of Washington. This discussion was considered by the undersigned not suitable in form for publication, but the speakers were invited to contribute a discussion of the subject to SCIENCE, and a paper by one of them, Mr. Erwin F. Smith, presenting views similar to those of your correspondent, was contributed by him

in abstract and printed in the issue of May 24th."

The *Journal of Botany* has printed this letter, excepting that the beginning has been altered so that the phrase 'as you state' may be omitted. The editor does not, however, withdraw the charges made in his journal.

In regard to the *Botanical Gazette* the editor of the *Journal of Botany* writes:

"We have received a similar communication, which we have unfortunately temporarily mislaid, from the editor of the *Botanical Gazette*, pointing out that articles opposing the neo-American nomenclature have appeared in that journal, and stating that the paper on the subject referred to in the extract we printed was rejected by him on grounds altogether apart from the line of argument adopted. The editor, however, in the number of the *Gazette* just to hand, publishes his justification in terms which are hardly free from the 'personalities' to which he objects in his contribution; and this can be consulted by those who wish to pursue the subject further."

The editorial article referred to is as follows:

"Under the caption 'American nomenclature,' the editor of the *Journal of Botany* prints in the July number a portion of a private letter from some American correspondent in which occurs the following:

"'The only two botanical journals are controlled by reformers. * * * The journals in question will not accept articles which give a true account of what has been said against the American system in Berlin and Vienna. A notice stating the facts was sent to SCIENCE, and * * * suppressed. It was then sent to the *Botanical Gazette*, but was declined.'"

"Inasmuch as the editor has sufficient grace to recognize this charge of suppression of the truth as a serious one, it would seem to have been his duty to determine whether it was true or false before publishing it. He could hardly have failed to observe that the *Gazette* has been publishing articles adverse to the reform movement in nomenclature, and had he re-examined them he would have found four of the six on this topic by opponents of reform and only two in favor of it. Another, likewise adverse, is published in this number. We challenge our

readers to say whether this shows a spirit of fairness or a desire to suppress discussion. Does it even indicate an inclination to refuse 'articles which give a true account of what has been said against the American system?'

"So much the editor of the *Journal* could have inferred from the action of the *Gazette*. It is enough to raise at least a presumption that his correspondent's statement was untrue. But he prefers to assume that what the *Gazette* has rejected has been rejected for the purpose of suppressing the truth.

"As a matter of fact the *Gazette* has rejected but one article on the subject of nomenclature. The article 'suppressed' by SCIENCE was rejected by us because it contained numerous objectionable personalities. In returning the MS. we took pains to inform the author that we objected only to the personalities, *not* to his opinion on nomenclature, and that if the personalities were eliminated the paper would be accepted. When the MS. was returned to the editor, however, it had been so greatly amplified that it would have filled at least thirteen pages of the *Gazette*. It was therefore returned to the writer with a request to condense it, and he was offered any space up to five pages (about the space required by the original paper), but he declined to alter the MS., and finally withdrew it.

"It is difficult to believe that a wish to be fair to what he is pleased to call 'the arbitrary dicta of certain American botanists' animates the utterances of the editor of the *Journal of Botany*. If it does it is at least curious that two scientific men should come to such opposite conclusions upon the same facts as do Mr. James Britten and a strenuous but gentlemanly opponent whose name we withhold but whose voluntary words we are permitted to quote:

"'I have greatly regretted the ill-natured statements of J. Britten, especially those in which he implies that there has been any unfair suppression of opinion by the *Gazette*. I am confident that whatever has been rejected by the *Gazette* has been refused for the best reasons and for the sake of harmony and the best good of all concerned.'"

It would seem certain from the above that no attempt has been made either by SCIENCE or by the *Botanical Gazette* to suppress discussion of

botanical nomenclature. Probably no American journal wishes to suppress discussion, but it is evidently impossible to accept everything presented, and but few journals would care to print an article such as that contained in the July number of the *Journal of Botany*.

J. McKEEN CATTELL.

BLOOD EXAMINATION IN DISEASE.

THE suggestion of Prof. Le Conte that some notice be taken of articles in which statements are made that are liable to mislead, or that are absolutely erroneous, calls to mind an article in the Scientific American Supplement for May 4, 1895 (p. 16, 126), by Prof. John Michels, entitled "Does a nucleus exist in the red corpuscles of mammalian blood?" In it the following assertion is made:

"It is a remarkable fact that although a knowledge of blood is of such importance and probably the key to a perfect knowledge of the treatment of disease, little or next to nothing is known relating to its physiological properties, its constituents or its effects on the human economy in health or disease. No physician ever makes a microscopical examination of blood in making his diagnosis, and if he did, he would be unable to interpret the appearances he would notice, for there is no guide to the subject, the medical profession remaining under a cloud of ignorance in regard to this matter, and they appear to be content to wait to have this knowledge forced upon them by chemists and biologists, rather than make any effort on their own part to relieve their condition of disgraceful ignorance."

That there still remains much to be learned regarding the blood is undeniable. But that the medical profession is in a state of ignorance in regard to it, or that no one ever makes a microscopical examination of blood in making his diagnosis, is absolutely false. Since the discovery of the hematozoa of malaria by Laveran, in 1880, thousands of cases of malarial fever have been diagnosed absolutely by blood examination. All late books on the practice of medicine refer to this as a valuable aid to diagnosis in this disease. Dr. Wm. Osler, of John Hopkins University, who has made a special study of malarial diseases, can, perhaps, give Prof. Michel some information on this point.

So, too, in cases of anæmia. An examination of the blood will infallibly diagnose the