respecting your acquaintance with the widow Russell and her lovely daughter; and I must confess that the unmeasured terms you have poured out your wrathful indignation against them has (pardon me for saying so) roused my suspicion greatly. Glad indeed shall I feel to find that the tale is unfounded, when it has been properly investigated.

I remain, dear Sir, very truly yours.

Wm. Adams, Esq.

JOHN PROPERT.

34, Cannon-street, Dec. 30th, 1861.

SIR,—My client, Mr. Adams, has forwarded to me your letter to him, and instructed me to afford you any information in my power which may assist you or your solicitor in the investigation which you state it to be your intention to make. I may perhaps be permitted to say, that so far as I am acquainted with any charge advanced against him by either Mrs. or Miss Russell, it is wholly without foundation, and that I have no doubt of being able to substantiate what I say, should the necessity arise.

I am your obedient servant,

John Propert, Esq.

JOHN MACKRELL.

6, New Cavendish-street, Jan. 1st, 1862.

SIR,—In answer to your communication I beg to say, that I feel obliged to you and your client for your generous and disinterested offer! I have every confidence in my solicitor that he will be able to conduct matters satisfactorily. Glad indeed shall I feel, for the honour of our noble profession, should a jury coincide with you in opinion.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. Mackrell, Esq.

JOHN PROPERT.

34, Cannon-street West, Jan. 18th, 1862.

(*Re* Mrs. EMILY RUSSELL).

SIR,—I shall be obliged by your giving me an appointment to see you, to lay before you information which has been furnished me herein, and I shall be happy to meet your solicitor also if you wish it.

I am, yours faithfully,

J. Propert, Esq.

JNO. MACKRELL.

6, New Cavendish-street, Jan. 18th, 1862.

SIR,—I hasten to acknowledge your letter this morning received, and to say, that I am compelled reluctantly to decline the honour of a visit from you, as, whatever you may have to say against Miss Russell will have a better effect, *if true*, before a jury; and for the honour of our profession, I do earnestly hope your client will be able to clear himself, or, more plainly speaking, *not guilty*. At the same time, as a lover of my honoured profession, I should much prefer that such an action were never allowed to appear in the Court of Queen's Bench, against an honoured member; but matters now must take their course!

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

John Mackrell, Esq.

JOHN PROPERT.

34, Cannon-street West, Jan. 22nd, 1862.

SIR,—I have no wish for an interview with you in opposition to the views expressed in your letter of the 18th inst.

I consider, however, that you ought not to have made such use of my letter to you as to entail upon me the scurrilous communication I have received to-day, and of which I think it right to send you a copy.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. Propert, Esq.

JOHN MACKRELL.

6, New Cavendish-street, Feb. 24th, 1863.

MY DEAR CHURCHILL,—I think, after the many years of uninterrupted friendship that has existed between us, you might strain a point to defend the hardworking Welshman—that is, *provided* you should hear it said to-day at the meeting that I had brought the action *Russell v. Adams*—when I say “so help me God” I had nothing to do with it; proceedings had been begun *months* before I ever knew that such people existed in the world as Mrs. Russell and her beautiful daughter, and that I never contributed or ever promised to contribute one farthing towards the expense of the trial!

Ever most truly yours,

J. Churchill, Esq.

JOHN PROPERT.

Dr. O'CONNOR asked if the solicitor who conducted the prosecution was not the private solicitor of Mr. Propert.

The CHAIRMAN said he could not give any information upon that subject; and thought they had better proceed with the business of the meeting.

Mr. CANNAN said that perhaps some of Mr. Propert's friends would be able to state that Mr. Pike, who conducted the prosecution, was not Mr. Propert's solicitor.

Mr. J. DANGERFIELD moved, “That a petition be presented to Parliament, praying that a committee may be appointed to inquire into the reforms necessary in the present legal procedure; and praying especially that greater facilities may be given for prosecuting persons who make unfounded attacks upon character.” He said that, belonging to the profession of the law, he had been asked to look into the nature of the law with regard to charges of this description; and the meeting would be surprised to find that there were some half-a-dozen anomalies of very peculiar character. A threat to make a charge against a person for the purpose of extorting money, was a criminal offence, and might be punished accordingly; but, curiously enough, when the charge itself was brought, it was not a criminal offence. Again, however artful, designing, and unscrupulous an individual might be, and whatever effort might be made at concocting a charge against an innocent man, unless two persons were engaged in the act, no indictment for conspiracy would lie. So again, with regard to the law of perjury, no indictment for that offence would lie, unless the statement sworn to could be contradicted by two witnesses. Some attempts were made at the trial to give evidence in favour of Mr. Adams, to the effect that charges of a similar nature had been previously made by the Russells, in Wales; the judge, however, could not receive the evidence, because it referred to what was called an immaterial issue. It was also a curious thing that an indictment for perjury would not lie, in respect of a false statement made at a trial, where an immaterial issue was raised. He would say nothing on the subject of a public prosecutor, though there were doubtless many cases in which persons, not having the means possessed by Mr. Adams, would be unable to defend themselves from charges brought against them, and would be glad to avail themselves of a public prosecutor, if such a functionary existed. It was certainly advisable that some alteration should take place in the law, and for this reason he desired to bring before the meeting the resolution he proposed.

Mr. J. CHURCHILL seconded the resolution. The philanthropy of the medical profession, he said, peculiarly exposed it to charges of a scandalous nature, but the recent trial would not be without its good results if it produced a wide-spread feeling that should tell upon the Legislature, and induce it to declare that the law should no longer offer facilities for these unjust and cruel actions, while it threw every impediment in the way of prosecuting those by whom such charges were brought.

Mr. WALTER SMITH referred to the peculiarity of the law in not permitting the plaintiff or defendant to be called, in cases of breach of promise, and the injustice occasionally produced by that state of things. He congratulated Mr. Adams in not having been the defendant in an action for seduction. The reason why he was not was obvious. In such an action, the person seduced was not the plaintiff, and could, therefore, be called to give evidence.

The resolution having been adopted, a vote of thanks was unanimously accorded to the chairman, and the proceedings terminated.

Correspondence.

“Audi alteram partem.”

SURGERY OF THE FEDERAL ARMY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having spent my Christmas holidays in visiting the military hospitals of Philadelphia, Washington, and the vicinity of Fredricksburg, I have thought that a short communication relative thereto might be acceptable to some of your numerous readers. Favoured with a letter of introduction from Professor Van Buren, of the University of New York, to Surgeon-General Hammond, of the United States Service, I found the latter gentleman at once urbane and dignified; and while many calls were constantly pressing upon him, not only was he willing, but anxious, to afford me every facility to see the many hospitals in connexion with the service.

With respect to the professional status of the army surgeons, I was told by one of the Board of Examiners that, while the quantity was very great, the quality was deficient. It should, however, be remembered that this gigantic war has come upon

the nation with a suddenness that precluded the possibility of that perfect organization of the medical department, and the establishment of that thoroughly efficient board of examiners, which are so necessary to the welfare of an army engaged in active service. Moreover, very many of the surgeons and assistant-surgeons have been appointed by the different States to regiments sent therefrom, which appointments were in many cases entirely through political favour. The consequences of these evils have been sufficiently apparent. But the present efficient Surgeon-General, with those immediately connected with the department at Washington, are making efforts not only to prevent unworthy persons from entering, but also to rid the service of all incapables who may have gained admission thereto.

A foundation has already been laid at Washington for a most interesting and instructive museum. This is more immediately under the control of Dr. Goulay, formerly of New York, and Demonstrator of Anatomy in the University. The museum consists of dried specimens, principally severe injuries to bones caused by balls which had produced death, or which had been removed by operation—amputation or resection. Material is constantly arriving from all parts of the widely-extended army. The bones, being thoroughly cleaned, are arranged with much skill on wires, so as to show the manner in which the ball had entered, the effects immediately produced, and subsequently the efforts made by Nature to repair the injury. By this means it is clearly demonstrated that the Minié ball is but rarely turned aside by the bone; and that, although the ball is generally much battered, it will pass through even the largest bone, or, if the momentum be not very great, it will bury itself in the osseous tissue. In every instance the bone was seen more or less comminuted, even where the ball had seemingly passed through the bone with considerable force. From looking at these specimens it would appear as if the cone-shaped ball passed into the bone in a wabbling manner, and that thereby great destruction, characteristic of that ball-wound, is accomplished.

I had pointed out to me a large number of specimens where resection of the shoulder-joint had been performed, nearly all of which had been successful. The museum will, undoubtedly, at the close of the war, be, of the kind, the most important in the world.

Steps have already been taken to prepare an elaborate history of the surgery of the war, the time of one whose name I forget being exclusively devoted to it. I found great satisfaction in visiting the hospitals in and about Washington, of which there is a very large number. Many of them have been in churches and other public buildings which were appropriated after the battle of Bull Run. These were fast being emptied, and the patients were being sent to sheds which have been erected for the purpose; they are substantially built, in almost every case well ventilated, and supplied with a good light. I was particularly pleased with the Douglas Hospital, which consists of the fine house in which Senator Douglas used to live, and several large sheds. The discipline in this hospital was of the most commendable kind, and in every department it was in most perfect order. The surgeon in charge, Dr. Pineo, is a native of New Brunswick. I might refer to others, especially the Lincoln, which was just being opened, and which is composed of some dozen different sheds, each large enough to contain about a hundred patients. Everything, indeed, is done for the welfare of the sick and wounded.

Through the kindness of the Surgeon-General, I was allowed to pass to the army of the Potomac. This was about ten days after the battle of Fredericksburg, and while there yet remained in the vicinity a large number of the most seriously wounded, many of whom had been subjects of amputation. After a pleasant though novel journey down the Potomac to Aquia Creek, and then by railroad, I was most kindly entertained by the Director-General of General Sumner's Corps, Dr. Dougherty. Being provided with a horse, I accompanied him on a visit to see the tented hospitals under his control, which were within sight of the ground upon which the battle was fought, the Rappahannock intervening.

I will now refer to some points upon which the cases here and elsewhere seen seemed to me to have an important bearing. Although a strong advocate of conservative surgery in the broadest sense of the term, I became convinced that upon the field amputation was less frequently resorted to than it should be; that while in a few cases the operation was unnecessarily performed, in many cases it was omitted when it afforded the only chance of recovery. The Minié ball, when it strikes a bone, produces extensive comminution; while all along the track, where it has passed in the soft parts, there is a good deal of destruction of tissue. Now, if absolute rest could

be secured to the patient, in many cases Nature would be adequate to effect repair; but the circumstances of war, the frequent and, in many cases, careless removals to which the wounded are subjected, preclude the possibility of recovery under the care of the most judicious surgeon. In very many cases, were primary amputation practised, the system, rid of a great source of irritation, would safely endure the subsequent disturbance. Perhaps in injuries involving the leg, and more especially the thigh, such proves more generally to be the case. I saw several such at Washington upon which the surgeon was forced to operate because of the weakened condition of the constitution, believing they would die under the operation, but upon whom it should have been performed at first. I had the opportunity of seeing a large number of stumps. The most of these were of the flap operations; some, however, were of the circular kind. Without a single exception, the latter looked well and most promising; while a large number of the flap were doing badly. It is possible that the manner of dressing which is pursued by some of the assistant-surgeons was the cause of this condition. This mode of dressing was not unlike what I saw in Paris in 1856, that of applying a quantity of charpie, then numerous bandages, followed by several folds of cloth, nicely fastened; and I saw in addition, in one case, oil-silk tightly fastened around the whole. Position of the body and limb not being attended to, the muscles would be constantly pulling upon the sutures. Not unlikely the subsequent treatment had something to do with the bad, and in some cases gangrenous, stumps. Now, with regard to the circular operation, it certainly seemed true, as Dr. Goulay said to me, that after the operation, even when the stump received no further or very little attention, a good stump was likely to result. Carefully noticing them, I could see that the muscles were regularly contracting together over the end of the bone, and that the integument was uniting in a most satisfactory manner.

Other points of interest presented themselves to me; but I have already occupied a larger space than I intended.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. CANNIFF, M.D., M.R.C.S.E.,

Professor of Surgery at the University of Victoria College,
Toronto.

January, 1863.

HEALTH ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Doubtless your readers generally will fully coincide with your correspondents as to the importance of assurances against sickness, whilst but few will care to undertake the responsibility or labour which necessarily attends the establishment of a society that will at once afford the benefit required, together with the necessary security to the assurer.

You will, perhaps, kindly allow me to call the attention of your readers to the prospectus of the Confident Life Assurance Company, which has tables specially intended to meet the public want in this particular. The Company, in addition to the ordinary business of a Life Office, issues policies in all parts of the country guaranteeing from 5s. to £5 per week in case of sickness.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Finsbury-place South, Feb. 1863.

G. W. GILLEY LAKE.

ON THE WIRE COMPRESS, A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE LIGATURE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your journal of the 24th ultimo is a report of the meeting of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society on the 13th, from which I learn that a paper was read by Mr. Dix, Surgeon to the Hull Dispensary, "On the Wire Compress, a Substitute for the Ligature."

In describing the compress, Mr. Dix states that it is a modification of the method of arresting hæmorrhage devised by Professor Simpson, which it is believed will obviate all the disadvantages inherent to that method, and that "the idea was promulgated in a paper on acupressure, June 2, 1860," and put to proof in cases which Mr. Dix details; and he affirms the superiority of the compress over the ligature, both in amputations and aneurisms. Having read the report of the paper with the carefulness of an interested party, it appears to me that Mr. Dix has led his audience to infer that he originated the compress he described and eulogized, and that his hearers understood him to have done so. If I am correct in these suppositions, Mr. Dix has done me some little injustice, though, I trust, not intentionally. In strict right, and by written pro-