Okell and Alfred Herbert Marsh to be Surgeons (both dated Sept. 19th, 1891).—3rd Volunteer Battalion, the Welsh Regiment: Acting Surgeons Charles Downing and John Tatham Thompson, M.B., to be Surgeons (both dated Sept. 19th, 1891).—1st (City of Dundee) Volunteer Battalion, the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders): Acting Surgeon David Lennox, M.D., to be Surgeon (dated Sept. 19th, 1891.)

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE DIAGNOSIS OF HEAD INJURY FROM DRUNKENNESS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The subject brought forward by Mr. Battle in THE LANCET of Sept. 12th, 1891, is one of the first importance, especially to the surgeons of police who have to treat the patients. As surgeon to the C Division of the Metropolitan Police this subject in one form or another has been frequently brought to my attention, and some years since I wrote a *brochure* with the hope of assisting my brother surgeons in forming an opinion on, and in treating, these cases he describes. Unfortunately, they are only a small portion of those which may be roughly classified as due to pressure on the brain. The diagnosis would be sufficiently difficult were these straightforward cases; but unfortunately, with few exceptions, they have a halo of alcohol surrounding them, masking or intensifying the symptoms upon which we rely to form our opinion. Of course, a police-station or cell is not a proper place to make an elaborate diagnosis, and our instructions and desires are to have such cases removed to a hospital; but, unless the symptoms are pronounced, the hospital surgeons cannot take them in, and the surgeons at the workhouse infirmaries, if they have any doubt, will not do so. We have thus a responsibility thrown upon us most undesirable and perplexing. If we can remove the element of drink which, as I have said, hides the symptoms proper to brain trouble, we are more likely to be of service to the patient and to relieve ourselves of this great responsibility. Feeling this want, as all must who are brought into contact with these cases, I have for some years employed ammonia as more generally applicable than any other means of treatment. The preparation I use is the liquor ammoniæ fortior, which I allow insensible patients guardedly to inhale until they are sensible to some extent of its irritating action; then, when the patients are able to swallow, three drops of the ammonia in a tablespoonful of water are put far back in the mouth. The beneficial effects are soon seen: the fumes of drink vanish, and the symptoms proper to the particular brain mischief, if any, stand out more clearly. It is seldom necessary to continue the administration, though I have occasionally done so, and I have never seen any bad effects follow, as I at first thought possible. Mr. Battle is labouring under a misapprehension of the "Police Regulations" if he imagines any "inspector or sergeant" is allowed "to give an opinion on the subject," as I, or any other person connected with the service, would be pleased to show to one who has taken so deep an interest in this difficult question.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Jermyn-street, W.

J. H. WATERS.

THE LEPERS IN SIBERIA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Amongst the many enterprises for the amelioration of human suffering which come under the notice of your readers there is one which is perhaps less widely known than it deserves to be, and which I therefore crave your indulgence to mention shortly—viz., the work which is being carried on amongst the lepers of Siberia by two devoted English ladies, Miss Marsden and Miss Field. It is probably well known that the unfavourable conditions of existence in that vast inhospitable country lend themselves in marked degree to the propagation of the terrible scourge of leprosy, and the praise of attempt-

ing seriously to diminish it must be accorded to the heroic labours of these ladies. The interest which was recently aroused in the condition of lepers in South Africa by the melancholy tale of suffering published in one of the magazines will not have been forgotten, but the story of the poor outcasts on the dreary wastes of Siberia is, if possible, a sadder one. Miss Marsden, a Red Cross sister, who has proved her devotion on the battle-fields of the Russo-Turkish war, accompanied by Miss Field, who has the advantage of being entirely familiar with the Russian language, began this work almost without any aid except such as was afforded them in the way of facilities in travelling by the kindness of Russian officials. They chiefly occupied themselves in administering attendance and such little comforts as were obtainable to the patients whom they visited, but after much service of this kind, rendered in circumstances of the greatest personal hardships and discomfort, which would have daunted less noble-minded women, they found that these labours, however useful in individual instances, were of little avail unless more extensive measures could be adopted. The poor people expressed an anxious desire to have a hospital provided for the treatment of their disease, and this was of course beyond the personal resources of their benefactors to establish. Miss Field has now returned to this country to plead the cause of the lepers, with a view of enabling such a hospital to be founded, and she hopes to rejoin Miss Marsden shortly with the means to have this accomplished.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

HUGH LANE.

Hon. Surgeon to the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, Bath; Hon. Medical Officer to the Royal United Hospital, Bath.

Sept. 15th, 1891.

DESQUAMATION AND INFECTION IN SCARLET FEVER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS—Dr. Jamieson's paper in your last issue on a method of shortening the period of desquamation and infection in scarlet fever touches a matter of great interest to the general practitioner. I was very much interested in the question a year ago. Being attacked by the illness in a moderate form I spent three weeks in my bedroom, and then went to the Wardell Convalescent Hospital for Scarlet Fever at Stanmore. This is an excellent institution, where a certain number of upper-class patients are received. Its situation is splendid, and the grounds afford a means of getting out-door exercise without risk of infecting others, a great boon in the latter month of a weary and protracted imprisonment. Nurses and patients were all full of the best way of expediting peeling. Soaking in hot baths, washing with carbolic soap, putting the feet in hot water with washing soda, pumice stone and corn scrapers applied to the thick epidermis of hands and feet, were the regular daily exercise of all the patients. I used an ointment with carbolic and salicylic acids and wore gloves and socks at night, and at length finished peeling at the end of the seventh week. The only other means known to be of use there was painting the palms and soles with salicylic collodion. The thick skin was said to be thus removed in a few days, leaving a very tender new surface. Dr. Jamieson speaks highly of a 3 per cent. resorcin salicylic superfatted soap as assisting in the process, reducing the average stay in hospital from eight to six weeks, but very curiously finds a resorcin ointment of no use. It would be interesting to know from the London Fever Hospital, and those at Stanmore and other places, what is the average time before desquamation is complete in uncomplicated cases, what means they use to hasten the process, and which of these are of any avail. It is quite time to ask also if a patient is infectious until desquamation is complete. My own impression is that if a daily bath, with carbolic acid in it, and in which carbolic soap is used, is taken, the infective period is over long before the soles of the feet have finished peeling—say, in four weeks. The discoverers of the scarlatina germ, if I remember rightly, could not find it in the skin except for a very short time after desquamation had commenced. The only obvious way of testing the matter, letting the patient mix in society, is too dangerous to try. Could not some other method be discovered of settling the question? It would surely be a great relief to patient and doctor if the