The complainant said that he should like to carry the matter further, and asked if there was power of appeal.

The Magistrate: Your attorney will inform you as to the best steps to be taken in that respect.

Dr. GOULD said that, after the singularly irregular intrusion of the complainant, without any consultation with him as his solicitor, he thought it right to say that some little complaint had reached him, because he had not on the former occasion entered on the question of his consent having been asked to the performance of the post-mortem examination. He was anxious to state it publicly, that at the time there was pending a summons which would have raised the question; but he did not know until after the witnesses for the defence had been heard that it would be necessary to withdraw the case where the wrong party had been summoned.

The Magistrate intimated that it had been rightly withdrawn.

Dr. GOULD.—I may say that I anticipated your Worship's decision with regard to the impracticability of the Act.

Mr. POLAND.—I may say that the authorities of the hospital will be prepared to meet any further proceedings which the complainant may choose to take.

The 9th section of the Anatomy Act of 1832 provides,—“That in no case shall the body of any person be removed for anatomical examination from any place where such person may have died until after forty-eight hours from the time of such person's decease, nor until after twenty-four hours' notice, to be reckoned from the time of death of such deceased, to the inspector of the district, of the intended removal of the body; or if no such inspector shall have been appointed, to some physician, surgeon, or apothecary residing at or near to the place of death; nor unless a certificate, stating in what manner such person came by his death, shall, previously to the removal of the body, have been signed by the physician, surgeon, or apothecary who attended such person during the illness whereof he died; or if no such medical man attended such person during such illness, then by some physician, surgeon, or apothecary who shall be called in after the death of such person to view his body, and shall state the manner or cause of death according to the best of his ability and belief. But he shall not be concerned in examining the body after removal; and that in case of such removal such certificate shall be delivered, together with the body, to the party receiving the same for anatomical examination.”

Correspondence.

“Audi alteram partem.”

THE USE OF PURGATIVES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Observing in your impression of the 1st inst. an article on the judicious use of purgatives, I have been induced to present to your notice the result of treatment of dysentery on the following plan, as came under my observation some months since while acting as surgeon to the London, French, and New York Steam Service. I had on previous occasions tried it on a limited scale, and meeting with fair results I was desirous of renewing my trials. Having entire supervision, and every advantage at my command, I considered this a fair opportunity for final results.

When a day's sail from France, I was accosted in my limited walk by a man from France, who presented an extremely haggard appearance—eyes sunken into the sockets, and the very picture of woe. He was very feeble, having to support himself against the side of the ship. “Monsieur le docteur, regardez moi! Je suis très beaucoup de malade.” I made him sit down and explain his case. He had been a soldier for many years, and had passed much of his time in the tropics, where he had suffered considerably from dysentery, and on several occasions since his return, which had more than once brought him so low that the surgeons had slight hopes of his recovery. During the last twenty-four hours spent on land he had had five evacuations; since entry on ship, twelve. The last two were of decided dysenteric character, accompanied by much tormina and tenesmus, and considerable quantity of blood.

Taking this as a typical case, I determined forthwith to put into execution my plan of treatment. I ordered him to hospital, gave my steward strict orders that the room should be kept as cool and free from smell as possible; for the accomplishment of the latter I had liberal resort to the use of carbolic acid. I gave him then a large cup of arrow-root (about a pint), two ounces of sherry, and strong barley-water, of which he partook freely.

About 1 o'clock I repeated my visit, but, finding no improvement, I determined on applying an enema of arrow-root mixed with gum acacia. Continued the diet with sherry every four hours, as he was then in a very weak condition, adding to the barley-water some gum acacia.

At 8 P.M., before turning in, I saw him, and learned that there had only been five motions passed since my last visit, and considerable less blood. I gave him a cup of strong beef-tea, which he relished very much.

On the following morning his expression of face presented the appearance of great diminution of pain, and he had only five motions during the last twelve hours, not a trace of blood being visible in the last one, which was preserved for my inspection. He was greatly surprised at not having received any medicine by mouth. I told him I had hopes of his recovery by that sole treatment.

I continued the same treatment during the whole of the day, but towards evening there was a tendency to relapse into the old state, so I considered it advisable to renew the enema. I gave, in addition, milk (Anglo-Swiss) a glassful every two hours if required.

On the morning's visit he had passed but three motions, and from that hour began gradually to improve; in a few days he was able to move about, and during the severe heat of Gulf-stream latitudes he enjoyed perfect health.

Several other cases appeared; some I treated entirely by astringents (drugs), but the most satisfactory results I attained by the former method, which I may say was decidedly more pleasant to “Jack,” and he was more grateful for my “medicines” than he would have been to a captain's doctor, who presents him with the wishing cup of a half-pint or so of rhubarb mixture, which, under force of circumstances, he accepts, but with a very bad grace, walking off to the fore-castle blessing the “old man.” I omitted to state that on one or two occasions, when in extreme pain, I gave my patient a few whiffs of chloroform.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Oct. 6th, 1870.

LOGAN D. H. RUSSELL, M.D.

THE DEPUTATION ON DISEASE REGISTRATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The effect of a very condensed report of a conversation, like that between Mr. Goschen and the deputation from the British Medical Association and the Poor-law Medical Officers' Association, is often misleading. *The Times* report of the interview might leave the impression that the representatives of the British Medical Association authoritatively repudiated the principle of the Irish dispensary system, and that Mr. Goschen repudiated the figures on which I have based some of the chief arguments for a modification of our medical relief arrangements in England and Wales. Neither of those ideas is correct. The representatives of the British Medical Association had no authority to express either approval or disapproval of the Irish system. As for Mr. Goschen, he did not criticise my figures at all. He simply commented on my reference to what should be the limit of population assigned to a district medical officer, by remarking that, as the status of the inhabitants of a district often varied considerably, a mere population basis would be probably fallacious, and by referring to the weak point of the Irish system, the alleged indiscriminate issue of dispensary tickets, elicited a general disapproval of the adoption of that feature of the system here.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Dean-street, Soho, Oct. 19th, 1870.

JAMES ROGERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I suppose it is almost unnecessary to state that the report in *The Times* of the deputation on Poor-law Registration is incorrect in making me call myself a

physician "in large general practice." The only claim I made on Mr. Goschen's attention was that of being a member of the committee on Out-patient Hospital Reform.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Wimpole-street, Oct. 19th, 1870.

FRANCIS ED. ANSTIE.

THE SURGERY OF THE WAR.* (FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

I ARRIVED at Arlon, then the head-quarters of the Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded, on September 9th, expecting to be hurried off at once to the scene of the late fearful battles near Sedan, where, as we had heard in England, thousands were lying, with a very inadequate number of worn-out surgeons attending them. I was therefore rather surprised when Captain Brackenbury informed me that he had telegraphed to England nearly a week before that no more surgeons were wanted, as he already had more than he knew what to do with. I was accordingly condemned to three days' inaction in the dull town of Arlon, at the end of which time it was discovered that the staff of the Anglo-American ambulance at the Caserne d'Asfeld, Sedan, had been greatly overworked ever since the battle, and were in want of further help. I was accordingly ordered off at once to join Drs. Sims and McCormack at that place.

During the time I stayed at Arlon I had full opportunity of observing the mode of distribution and nature of the stores sent from England. At this time the dépôt had only lately been moved from Luxemburg to Arlon, where the Society had obtained the extensive vaults of the Palais de Justice as a storehouse. Of course order was not then fully established; but at the present time, under the skilful management of Mr. Bingley, the chief store-keeper, the arrangement is so perfect that any article could be found in the dark. In company with Dr. Roger, of Aberdeen, who came out the day after I did, and who worked most energetically in arranging the medical stores, I looked over the whole stock of drugs, splints, &c. We found a great want of judicious selection in the things sent from England, which I think could hardly have occurred if the stores had been examined and chosen by some medical man at the chief dépôt in London. Opium in all forms, quinine, chloroform, and hydrate of chloral were in enormous quantities, and I should think we found some gallons of liq. ammon. fort. and pints of tincture of camphor, but there was no chloride of zinc, or perchloride of iron, or ipecacuanha, and great want of aperients of all kinds. Bandages, lint, and charpie were in fair quantity, but I could have carried all the splints under my arm, and there was no plaster-of-paris. Carbolic acid was in considerable quantity, but not equal to the demand. At the present time all these wants have been abundantly supplied. We found many things sent no doubt with the best intention, but of no earthly use—relics of former illnesses, such as an old elastic knee-cap soaked in pus, several old elastic stockings, an abdominal support for pregnancy, baby-linen, worn-out enema syringes, old trusses, rusty instruments of peculiar and antiquated forms, and also a store of old kid gloves, and a large stock of English religious works. Before the middle of September, however, large numbers of new surgical instruments by the best makers arrived from London. The general stores consisted of beds, blankets, sheets, clothes, preserved meats and soups, Liebig's extract, condensed milk, biscuits, &c., all in great abundance. Bread, hams, and tobacco were also bought in considerable quantities in the town of Arlon, and sent where most needed. These stores were distributed to the country round Metz and Sedan by means of large convoys of country waggons, each convoy being under the charge of some English gentleman, as without such protection the drivers dare not venture upon French soil; and, moreover, they could not be trusted not to steal the whole lot of the stores unless carefully watched.

At last, on September 12th, I got off in company of one

of these convoys, consisting of eleven waggons bound for the Anglo-American ambulances at Sedan, Bazeilles, and Balon. The journey, which took two days, was performed at a slow walking pace, and through pouring rain all the way.

The hospital occupied by the Anglo-American ambulance at Sedan was the largest and best in the whole place, being a large barrack situated in the highest part of the town within the enclosure of the citadel, and commanding from its southern windows a splendid view of the Valley of the Meuse, and the town lying about 100 ft. below, the descent being perpendicular for nearly 50 ft. at a distance of about 20 yards from the front of the building. To the north and west, and partly to the east, it is sheltered by the ramparts, which rise above it to the height of about 40 ft., at a distance varying from 50 to 100 yards. The hospital itself is a rectangular two-storied building, supposed to be bomb-proof, its walls being of enormous thickness, and its roof flat. Each ward consists simply of a whitewashed arch of solid masonry, running across the building, and having at each end a large window about 10 ft. high by 7 ft. wide. Each ward communicates with those on either side of it by a door in the middle. The floor is asphalted and there are no fire-places or any other means of heating, so that although in summer-time it made a splendid hospital, in winter ventilation would have been impossible without endangering the lives of the patients from cold. During the day both windows were kept constantly open, but at night the upper part only, leaving an aperture about 7 ft. by 4 ft. The through-and-through ventilation was therefore most perfect, though not unaccompanied by draught. There were fourteen full-sized wards, each containing twenty beds without crowding; two similar wards, half occupied by the staircases, contained about twelve each; and there were two small rooms at the end accommodating about a dozen more; so that the whole capacity of the hospital was over 300 beds. Two rooms of similar construction to the rest, and reaching half across the building, served as quarters for the medical staff. The kitchen and closets were in a separate building at the western end, but the latter were in so foul a condition as to be useless, so that all the excreta had to be buried daily as far as possible from the hospital, and all foul linen, bandages, &c., were burned every morning. The water-supply was from a well, and would doubtless have been very good, had it not been for three Zouaves, who were either blown into the well by a shell, or had tried to take refuge in it, and were drowned, and whose bodies were not discovered until ten days after, by which time they had seriously polluted the water. At the east end of the ground, sloping up towards the ramparts, at the time of my arrival there were about twenty or thirty tents, containing a few fever cases and a considerable number of wounded; a few days after, however, the fever patients were removed, and room was made in the building for the wounded by evacuating some of the slighter cases. All the tents were then pulled down except three or four which were kept for cases of erysipelas, pyæmia, &c. At a short distance from the main building was another house, which served as a store-house, and as a barrack for the *infirmiers* and other servants of the hospital. One room at the end of the hospital was set apart as a "pharmacie," and was presided over by a French "pharmacien." The hospital was amply supplied with iron bedsteads and straw mattresses, which, I believe, belonged to the place when it was a barrack. The nursing was at first conducted by an efficient staff of *infirmiers*, and some trained dressers from the French military hospitals, who were all under the command of a lieutenant, under military law. Being prisoners, they were, of course, also under the control of the Prussians, who respected their red cross badge as long as they behaved themselves, but on any misconduct they were punished by being sent off as prisoners of war to Germany. The Prussian authorities gave considerable trouble by frequently changing, or even suddenly removing, large numbers of these men; at one time leaving the hospital almost destitute of nurses of any kind. To prevent this recurring Dr. Sims obtained a number of female nurses from the town, in addition to the *infirmiers*. Several English ladies, among whom were Miss Pearson, Mrs. Mason, and Miss Neligan, were also attached to the hospital, and worked indefatigably, rendering the greatest assistance, especially in the distribution of extra

* The manuscript notes forwarded by our correspondent contain a large amount of information, which our space compels us to publish by instalments.