CLITORIDECTOMY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—When I sent my letter of the 2nd inst. for insertion into your valuable journal it was not my intention to have entered into any discussion on the subject of Clitoridectomy, but simply to make my professional brethren aware of the fact that the patient now under my care had not received the slightest benefit from the operation, and to induce them to report similar cases, should they happen to meet with any.

Dr. Bantock is pleased to ask my opinion relative to the difference between extirpation of the clitoris and the application of caustics.

In answer to that I would say that, setting aside my own impression that we have scarcely more right to remove a woman's clitoris than we have to deprive a man of his penis, and in spite of Dr. Bantock's superior judgment and great experience in these matters, it is my firm belief that the latter proceeding—viz., the application of caustics—is much more desirable, because the effect of the caustic can be kept up for as long a period as the medical attendant pleases, and may, if necessary, be re-applied; whereas, with regard to extirpation, directly the part is healed peripheral irritation may be had recourse to again over the remaining branches of the pudic nerve. And certainly those who resort to clitoridectomy are very much afraid of this, or why should they insist on long-continued watching after it? Then again, it must strike any one who gives the subject a moment's consideration that when it is necessary for the success of an operation that careful and unceasing observation of the patient should be kept up for six or even twelve months afterwards, it is very questionable whether that operation is productive of any real good, and whether the watching minus the operation would not succeed equally well.

There are few, if any, diseases to the cure of which a medical man has so much difficulty in certifying as epilepsy, as it is a well-known fact that any new treatment is generally followed by marked though temporary improvement; and therefore statistics are of very little use until a long period has passed after the apparent success. I am sorry that females have not as much knowledge of the clitoris as we have, for if that were the case I am sure there are very few who would consent to part with it, and when questioned about it afterwards say, "Oh, I have only had a little knot removed." Verily they know not the nature of that little "knot."

Feeling that I have already trespassed too much on the columns of your journal, I beg to thank you and to assure you that, as I have no intention of carrying on a paper war, I will not again trouble you.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HARRY GAGE MOORE, L.R.C.P. Lond.

6, Northgate-street, Ipswich, June 19th, 1866.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In Dr. Bantock's reply to Mr. Moore's very temperate letter of the 7th inst., he says, in speaking of the above operation, "I have yet to learn that Mr. Brown professes to cure every case of epilepsy," &c. Now, if the patient referred to in Mr. Moore's letter be a specimen of Mr. Brown's cures, I have also yet to learn the success of his treatment. The young lady in question is a connexion of mine, and as I have in my possession Mr. Brown's correspondence with her brother (who I may here observe was solely responsible for his sister's admission to the Surgical Home), I can affirm that she was not only reported as relieved, but cured. The following is Mr. Brown's own statement: "It will be better to send some one for her. She is quite well." And in the copy of the report, which I have also before me, and said to be extracted from the Case-book of the Home, is the following:—"April 4th: Goes away to-day cured." It appears, however, so far from such being the case, or that she was even relieved, she had unconscious attacks on the very evening on which she left the Home; and she had, moreover, one every day but seven of the six weeks whilst resident with the lady under whose kind care she was placed immediately after quitting the Home, five of which were so bad and violent that her brother was summoned to remove her, which he did, and placed her under the care of a person at Ipswich accustomed to epileptics, where she now is, under the medical supervision of Mr. Moore, who reports of her: "Her fits returned with a severity never before equalled, and she is now as bad as ever."

If this is a specimen of the statistical returns of cures as effected in the Surgical Home, and as offered to the public, we may, I think, fairly say, "Ex uno disce omnes."

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Mildenhall, June 18th, 1866.

FRED. H. HARRIS.

POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me again to trespass on your valuable space to inform the Poor-law medical officers that I have to-day received from the Poor-law Board a reply to my letters of May 17th and June 7th, which is as follows:—

"I am directed to state that your observations on the proposed Bill on Poor-law Medical Relief will receive the consideration of the Board. They are, however, unable to appoint a time for the attendance of a deputation on the subject.—ENFIELD, Secretary."

From the foregoing reply, and from what we read in the journals, I think it more than probable that some general measure for the amendment of the medical relief of the poor is in contemplation by the Poor-law Board.

I have applied to several members of Parliament to bring in the Bill proposed by the Association, copies of which were sent to the subscribers in March last, but the general opinion appears to be that, situated as Parliament now is, with the Reform Bill before it, no private member would have a chance of carrying a Bill of the kind this session unless it have the support of the Poor-law Board, or be brought in by that body as a Government measure. Under these circumstances we must wait and carefully watch the movements of the Poor-law Board in Parliament; and it is just possible we may, whilst united, and with money in hand, find ourselves sufficiently powerful to amend any Bill brought in by them should it not meet our views. This work was eminently successful with the Vaccination Bill, and although we have not been able to make it all we could wish, still we have been the means of inducing the Select Committee to make improvements in it which will benefit the public vaccinators of England and Wales to the extent of some thousands of pounds per annum, and amply repay the Association for the labour of the last ten years, even should no other reform be accomplished; but I feel confident other beneficial measures are still in store for us.

Yours, &c.,

RICHARD GRIFFIN.

12, Royal-terrace, Weymouth, June 13th, 1866.

MEDICAL TRIAL.

OLD COURT.

(Before Mr. Justice BYLES.)

THE further hearing of the case of Helen Forester, the midwife, who was charged with the wilful murder of Helen Ann Venables, otherwise Sloman, by making use of an instrument to procure abortion, was resumed and concluded.

Mr. Daly, as before, appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. Montague Williams and Mr. Straight for the defence.

It will be remembered that the deceased, who was a married woman and the mother of several children, went to the prisoner in April last, and gave her £3 to procure a miscarriage of the child of which she was then five months pregnant; that the miscarriage was caused, but that the painful nature of the operation then performed upon her by the prisoner was alleged to have produced her death in about a fortnight afterwards.

Augustus Brown, M.D., of Belitha-villas, was now examined. He said that about ten o'clock on the night of the 26th of April he was called to attend the deceased. She lived at 8, Barnsbury-grove, Barnsbury-park. She was in a very excited state of mind when he first saw her. She had had hæmorrhage, her body appeared swollen, and her pulse was beating at the rate of 120. From these symptoms he augured that she had been recently delivered. It was impossible to say how long she had been in the family-way. She died on the evening of the 6th of May. He made a post-mortem examination, in company with two other medical men, Mr. Morrison and Dr. Walker. They found that the uterus had been lacerated and punctured through, by which inflammation was caused, and eventually death. She made a statement,