SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, WITH EMPLOYMENT.

THE following remarks, extracted from Miss MARTINEAU'S recent work on America, bear on the subject which we briefly discussed when analysing, lately, the pamphlet of Mr. MALCOLMSON on the effect of solitary confinement and low diet on health:—

“In the treatment of the guilty, America is beyond the rest of the world, exactly in proportion to the superiority of her political principles.

“I was favoured with the confidence of a great number of the prisoners in the Philadelphia Penitentiary, where absolute seclusion is the principle of punishment. Every one of these prisoners (none of them being aware of the existence of any other), told me that he was under obligations to those who had the charge of him, for treating him ‘with respect.’ The expression struck me much as being universally used by them. Some explained the contrast between this method of punishment, and imprisonment in the old prisons, copied from those of Europe; where criminals are herded together, and treated like anything but men and citizens. Others said, that though they had done a wrong thing, and were rightly sequestered on that ground, they ought not to have any further punishment inflicted upon them; and that it was the worst of punishments not to be treated with the respect due to men. In a community where criminals feel and speak thus, human rights cannot but be, at length, as much regarded in the infliction of punishment, as in its other arrangements. Much yet remains to be done; to this end, an enormous amount of wrong must remain in a society where the elaboration of a vast apparatus for the infliction of human misery, like that required by the system of solitary imprisonment, is yet a work of mercy. Milder and juster methods of treating moral infirmity will succeed when men shall have learned to obviate the largest possible amount of it. In the meantime, I am persuaded, that this is the best method of punishment which has yet been tried. Much as the prisoners suffer from the dreary solitude, cheered only by their labour, and the occasional visits of official superintendents, they testified, without exception, and without concert, to their preference of this over all other methods of punishment. The grounds of preference were, they could preserve their self-respect in the first place; and, in the next, their chance in society on their release. They leave the prison with the recompense of their extra labour in their pockets, and without the fear of being led by vicious old companions, or hunted from employment to employment by those whose interest it is to deprive them of a chance of establishing a

character. There is no evidence at present, that solitary imprisonment, *with labour*, is more injurious to health than any other condition which is attended with anxiety of mind. The Philadelphia prisoners certainly appeared to me to be more healthy-looking than those at Auburn, or at any other prison I visited.

INGUINAL HERNIA,

SUCCESSFULLY OPERATED ON, AFTER BEING STRANGULATED SEVEN DAYS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I shall feel obliged by the insertion of the following case in your valuable periodical. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. G. RAWSON.

Kegworth, Leicestershire,
July 4th, 1837.

About twelve months ago, Elizabeth Baguley, ætat. 45, after lifting a heavy weight, complained of symptoms resembling those arising from strangulated hernia, but as she denied having any tumour in the ordinary situations of hernia, and positively refused to be examined, it was treated as a case of intussusception, by bleeding, the warm bath, purgatives, calomel, &c., but without effect. On the fifth day, stercoraceous vomiting took place, and on the eighth day, there were hiccough, the pulse scarcely perceptible, but intermittent, cold extremities, and great distention of the abdomen. She now submitted to an examination, when a small tumour was detected in the left groin. I immediately proceeded to operate: the peritoneal sac was highly distended with gas, and also contained a considerable quantity of serum; the small knuckle of intestine was pretty strongly adherent to the ring, and of a deep purple hue; the adhesions were carefully separated, the opening was enlarged, and the intestine returned. The patient rapidly recovered, and is still living.

The success of this case appears to me an encouragement to operate, even under the most unfavourable circumstances.

OBSTRUCTED INTESTINE, ENDING FATALLY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—The following case of obstructed intestine occurred to me some short time back, the particulars and dissection of which I have drawn up, and hope you will think them of sufficient interest for a place in your valuable Journal. I am, Sir, yours most obediently,

WM. HARVEY.

42, Great Queen-st., Lincoln's Inn-fields.
July 12th, 1837.