ON AN INSTRUMENT RECENTLY USED BY MR. CRAMPTON IN AN OPERATION OF LITHO- TOMY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—IN Number 117 of THE LANCET, your correspondent "ERINENSIS" gives an account of an operation of lithotomy, which was lately performed at the County Dublin Infirmary, but in his anxiety to be severe, he has lost sight of that accuracy which should distinguish a medical communication. The operation was performed in the presence of nearly two hundred persons, among whom were, I believe, all the eminent surgeons in Dublin; the circumstances attendant upon it must therefore be perfectly well known to all those who were so situated as to be enabled to see the proceedings of the operator. That your correspondent was not so circumstanced must appear from the following brief statement of the facts, for the accuracy of which I of course must be held responsible to you and the highly respectable gentlemen who witnessed and assisted at the operation. Passing over without comment the offensive allusion to myself, I shall confine my observations to that which alone can be interesting to the profession, namely, the facts of the case.

First, then, "the instrument which was substituted for the forceps," although made, was not *invented* by me; for its merits or its defects Mr. Crampton is alone responsible.

Secondly, a reference to the drawing of the instrument, which I take the liberty to subjoin, will be sufficient to show that your correspondent's description applies to a *totally different instrument*, which, although lying on the table, was not made use of in the operation, nor even intended to be so employed.

Thirdly, it is sufficiently obvious that no "force" could be required to push an instrument, such as is represented in the annexed drawing, into the bladder; it was accordingly passed into the bladder with the greatest facility, upon the finger, which had been previously introduced as a director into the bladder.

Fourthly, the instrument was not "twisted about for a quarter of an hour," for, at the first attempt to rotate it in the

bladder, the handle, which had been insecurely fixed, separated from the shaft; *the instrument was therefore withdrawn in less than a minute, and no other instrument of the kind was introduced.*

The extraction of the calculus was afterwards effected by the common forceps.

It is proper however to mention, and it perhaps accounts for the mistake into which your correspondent has fallen, that Mr. C. introduced in succession three different pair of forceps, the blades of the first two pair being so wide apart as to be unable to hold a calculus of so small a size; with the third pair the stone was easily seized and extracted.

Lastly, your correspondent inadvertently omitted to mention, that the operation was not succeeded by the slightest untoward circumstance, and the child left the Hospital perfectly healed on the twenty-first day.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

FRANCIS L'ESTRANGE.

35, Baggot-street, Dublin,
December 9th, 1825.

P. S.—I may just observe that Mr. C. has made repeated experiments with the instrument on the dead subject, in the presence of myself and of several other professional persons, and invariably succeeded in extracting a stone from the bladder with the greatest facility. His manner of using the instrument is as follows:—

The fore-finger of the left hand used as a director, the instrument in its closed state (Fig. 1.) is introduced into the bladder. By pushing down the button C., with the thumb of the right hand, the blade B. is raised from A. and the instrument is opened in the bladder.—The calculus being stooped by the fore-finger of the left hand, which just touches it, a movement of rotation is given to the instrument, by which the stone is pressed into the bag (which is attached to the holes in the blade A., and round the side B.) the button B. is then allowed to recoil, by which the mouth of the bag is closed, the elastic blade B. descending to the dotted line D. The instrument is then withdrawn, and the stone is found enclosed in the bag.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 1.