they are happily blinded to a sense of their own physical degradation. And this is why I have occasionally sanctioned the withdrawal from a patient of his bedding and clothing at one of those periods when his destructiveness has reached its highest point. I have been unwilling to see the county property destroyed night after night, for no sort of purpose.

"In the interview which I had with the Commissioners in Lunacy on the 18th of June, I invited them to give me some suggestions as to the manner of treating such cases as those now under consideration. They say that for patients to be in rooms without bedding or clothing is unheard of in this philanthropic age, and that such circumstances admit of no sort of justification. But it must be known to any Commissioner who has been a superintendent of an asylum of any magnitude that numberless patients are uncovered the whole night—that they will stand up naked or lie upon the bare floor, having heaped their bedding and clothing into one corner of the room, or amused themselves by tearing it to pieces. They condition for themselves, unconsciously, the very surroundings of only seeming discomfort, which have been very rarely and exceptionally ordered in cases of extreme destructiveness. The two states are absolutely identical."

Let me beg of you, as the editor of a scientific journal of wide repute, in any reply which you may make to these remarks, to approach the subject in a calm and dispassionate spirit. Do not permit yourself to be hounded-on by a sensational cry, worthy only of the penny-a-liners who scribble for effect and for sale, recklessly indifferent to facts, and supremely regardless of the character of those about whom they write. If you cannot embrace the theory which I advance, if you do not believe it to be sound, I would invite you to meet me in the hot chamber of a Turkish bath, either here or in London, where, when your skin has reached that abnormal temperature which, unrelieved by perspiration, is distress, I will clothe you in a ticken dress, lined with flannel, and laced up behind. Your case will then exactly represent the condition of many destructive general paralytics, or of some even in the first stage of acute mania, minus the hyperæsthesia which is so often superadded to the lunatic, and renders clothing insufferable. You will then learn for the first time the difference between freedom and restraint. Your next leading article upon this subject will be less enthusiastic, and less tinged with that large and indignant spirit of pseudo-philanthropy which made you speak of a return to barbarism and of things unworthy, in your judgment, of a scientific age. You will stand convicted, having passed through the fiery ordeal of experimental suffering.

I am as persuaded of this as I can be of the truth of any facts which I have learned by observation and by personal experience. If I am compelled to yield to public clamour, and to the requirements of legitimate supervisors appointed by the State, I do not alter my opinion as to the merits of what I propose. I am satisfied that the proper treatment for such cases as those we have been considering is, a clothing most suited to hyperæsthesia and to preternatural dermal heat, combined with a freedom without which there can be no approach to the soothing and the palliative. Such a clothing (as I said before) is the soft and yielding atmosphere of a temperate chamber, whose wrappings are appreciated though unseen, and whose freedom is the very perfection of its adaptiveness.

If medical superintendents do not know this, I am much mistaken. If the practical and working members of the Lunacy Commission do not know it, I am mistaken likewise. It is one thing, however, to know, and another to *do*. I am the first medical superintendent who has dared to give official sanction to that which is not to be avoided but by the substitution of something which, while it may meet the clamorous requirements of public opinion, does not meet the pressing needs of personal suffering.

In conclusion, I would beg of you to ask any of the Middlesex magistrates whom you may happen to know, and who were present at the Court when Mr. Pownall made his attack upon me, what was the impression left upon their mind after they heard Mr. Wyatt's reply and explanation.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Colney Hatch, March 10th, 1867. EDGAR SHEPPARD, M.D.

* * The statement in THE LANCET quoted by Dr. Sheppard, and referred to by him as "untruthful" and "inaccurate," is, as he must be aware, taken almost word for word from The Times report of Mr. Pownall's speech at the opening of the Middlesex Sessions; its substantial truth was not chal-

lenged by any one of the magistrates present, was tacitly admitted by Mr. Wyatt, the chairman of the Colney-hatch Asylum, and until now has not been denied. The severe language of Mr. Pownall, the rebuke of the Commissioners in Lunacy, and our comments, are therefore not justly described as founded upon "fiction" or "sensational stories." We much fear that Dr. Sheppard is more wedded to his opinion than we could have thought possible, as we now find him publicly defending the treatment we impugned. We believe Dr. Sheppard, however well-meaning, to be wrong, and his treatment of patients who destroy their clothes and bedding to have been entirely mistaken. The Committee of Colney-hatch seem to agree with us, as they undertake, through their chairman, that no similar treatment shall occur again. We print Dr. Sheppard's ill-advised letter, but we regret to find it proves that the superintendent of the principal Lunatic Asylum of Middlesex has adopted views as to the proper treatment of his patients not in concurrence with those advocated by his professional brethren, and which appear to us as well as to the Commissioners in Lunacy inconsistent with the modern and more enlightened system of treating mental disease.—ED. L.

THE FACTORIES BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With reference to that part of the article in your impression of the 9th inst. on the Factory Acts which relates to the mortality among the grinders, may I ask if it would be impracticable to obviate the mischief by separating the mechanics from the grinding-wheel by means of a partition, with a glass window inserted to see through, and apertures for the arms?—the partition to go from floor to roof.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,
Southam, March 13th, 1867. WALTER LATTEY.

Parliamentary Intelligence.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MARCH 6TH.

SANITARY STATE OF HOLYHEAD.

MR. WALPOLE, in reply to Mr. O. Stanley, said that Dr. Buchanan's report of the sanitary state of Holyhead would be published in the Report of the Medical Department of the Privy Council, and need not, therefore, be printed separately.

CHOLERA.

In reply to Sir J. C. Jervoise, MR. WALPOLE said he could not undertake to say whether Dr. Frankland's report on cholera-stuff (cholerine) was scientifically true. The Registrar-General had published it in his appendix to his Weekly Return, believing it to be a valuable document, emanating as it did from so high an authority as Dr. Frankland, and as tending to put the public on their guard in dealing with what were supposed to be cholera cases. He was not aware that the Government intended to introduce any Bill on the subject.

Sir J. C. JERVOISE asked the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention had been called to the report of the medical officer of the Privy Council (1866), in which he states, pp. 39-40, the mode in which cholera-contagium is generated; whether the discoverer has divulged his method of obtaining this deadly agent; and, if not, why not; and whether the annual report of the medical officer, which was not accessible to members till towards the end of July in the last, will be so at an early period of this session.

MR. CORRY said the statement referred to was not due to any single discoverer, but was the result of scientific investigation by many competent authorities. With regard to the annual report, a great deal of extra labour had been cast upon the medical officer by the cholera outbreak of last summer, and he could not, therefore, hold out the expectation that it would be presented much earlier than it was last year.

MARCH 8TH.

METROPOLITAN POOR BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.