

CORRESPONDENCE.

On the Treatment of a Certain Class of Destructive Patients.

I.

Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum,
Colney Hatch, N., December 10th, 1869.

SIR,—In some correspondence which has lately passed between the Committee of Visitors of this Asylum and the Commissioners in Lunacy on the subject of providing bedsteads and bedding for patients of a wilfully destructive nature, the Commissioners have expressed themselves as strongly of opinion that the practice, occasionally resorted to at this asylum, of taking away, for a limited period of time, the usual bedsteads and bedding from such patients who persistently destroy them, and putting them in single rooms with an ample supply of strong quilted rugs, is "unjustifiable in any case."

As a guide to them in their future action in these cases, the Committee would feel much obliged by your informing them what is the course pursued at the Asylum under your charge; and they desire me to ask you to favour them with a description of the mode of treatment you adopt in the cases of patients who without being under the effects of any sudden paroxysm, are so violent and destructive as persistently to break up the bedsteads and tear in pieces the bedding with which they are supplied. The Committee specially desire information whether in the event of patients destroying their bedding in the early part of the night, the same is renewed to them as often as they destroy that which had been previously supplied, or whether they are left without any bedding for the remainder of the night on which they have exhibited their destructive tendencies.

To prevent any misapprehension as to the practice adopted at the Colney Hatch Asylum, I beg to inform you that when the ordinary bedding is taken away from the patients, they are, in lieu thereof, supplied with three warm quilted rugs which, if used, afford them ample protection against the cold, and and of which, after attempting in vain to destroy them, they usually avail themselves as a covering.

The favour of an early reply will oblige the Committee.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN S. SKAIFE,

Clerk to the Visitors.

To the Superintendent of the Sussex Asylum.

II.

Sussex Lunatic Asylum,
Hayward's Heath, December, 15, 1869.

SIR,—I had the honour to receive this morning your letter, dated December, 10th, making enquiries relative to the treatment of a certain class of destructive patients in this Asylum.

I most strongly, after an experience here of ten years, endorse the opinion of the Commissioners in Lunacy to which you refer, that it is unjustifiable in any