

The Austrian Curatel Procedure.

In Austria the Curatel law has long applied, not only to the insane, but also to habitual drunkards and others deficient in self-control. This law provides for the appointment of a Curator, under whose control the patient is put when discharged from an asylum, etc. The Curatee can apply from time to time to the Court for the annulling of the Curatel, and the decision rests on the evidence of State physicians and other testimony. In some instances repeated applications have been made before the discharge from Curatorship has been granted.

One result is, as pointed out by Professor Schlangenhäusen,* that in Lower Austria there is great over-crowding in the asylums from the admission of forty per cent. of habitual drunkards. These, as elsewhere, are found to exert a deleterious effect on the ordinary insane, and the Austrian Government therefore proposes to construct for drunkards special asylums to be under State control.

The appointment of Curators in certain cases of insanity, as well as in states of loss of self-control, would certainly constitute a valuable supplement, not only to the treatment of these conditions, but also in safeguarding the community from those who are dangerous.

A provision of this kind might certainly be made with advantage in the forthcoming legislation by Parliament in regard to habitual drunkards, as it probably will be in the similar legislation for compulsory curative procedure which is under the consideration of the Reichsrath. Such an addition to legal control might be made without the sweeping re-modelling of our lunacy system which some of our lunacy reformers would advocate.

Attempted Attendants' Trades Union.

The attempt to form a trades union of attendants in Ireland has been quashed with the firmness and promptitude that the occasion demanded. A trades union is as impossible in an asylum as in the army or navy. Discipline would be impossible, and no confidence could be placed on a staff which would at any moment be paralysed by the action of an irre-

* *Wiener Medicinische Press*, Fl. 9, 1896.