

classed as "feeble-minded," and in its vagueness and want of definition embraces every possible variety of ordinary unteachableness, whether from physical, sensory, or mental defect.

The separation of imbeciles who require only nursing and care, from those capable of being taught and trained, which the Barony Parish is about to carry out, is another progressive step of great importance in dealing with this class, and may be expected to give better results than those hitherto attained.

The education and training which is given to the defective minded will, however, be of little real value if the efforts at making them useful members of society cease at the age of puberty.

Training in industrial habit for a considerable time after the age of sixteen is necessary to prevent their becoming social failures. Many of the special class children, for example, if left to their own devices or the influence of their relatives, will only have been rendered more efficient criminals.

Voluntary philanthropic organisations will probably be the most efficient means of watching over these classes after the school age, and in aiding them to start satisfactorily in life; fortunately many such bodies are already coming into existence, but much more comprehensive and systematic organisations will be required if the recommendations of the committee come into practice.

The need of legislation of this kind is most urgent, and it is not too utopian to anticipate that it would in course of time result in a considerable diminution of the numbers whom we are now obliged to class as social failures.

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*The Early Treatment Clause.*

The joint committees of the British Medical and Medico-Psychological Associations have formulated a recommendation in regard to this clause, which is practically identical with that in the present Scottish Lunacy Law.

The indications given in the Lunacy Bill preclude any sanguine expectation that an extension of the means of treatment in the early stage of mental disorder has much likelihood of being accepted.

The increasing accumulation of lunatics in our asylums, and

the heavy expenditure entailed by their maintenance will, however, ere long awaken the interest of ratepayers, and we may then hope that this will reinforce philanthropic effort and lead to more enlightened and liberal views predominating in our lunacy procedure.

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*Irish Local Government Bill.*

The Local Government (Ireland) Bill has passed through the stage of Committee, and, as it is little likely to be modified in the House of Lords, may be considered to have reached its final shape.

In the April number of the JOURNAL we drew attention to the clauses which deal with asylums.

Section 9 provides, as we then pointed out, for the general management of asylums, giving to asylum committees appointed by the county councils, and consisting in a proportion of not less than three fourths of county councillors, powers generally similar to those possessed by asylum committees in England. In Ireland the Lord Lieutenant will take the place held in England by the Home Secretary, as approving of the purchase of new lands and buildings, sanctioning plans for new works, and approving regulations for the government of the asylum.

Sub-section 6 of Section 9 has been amended in the manner indicated below, certain words being added which we distinguish by italics:

“(6.) The county council, through the said committee, may, and if required by the Lord Lieutenant shall, make regulations respecting the government and management of every lunatic asylum for their county, and the admission, detention, and discharge of lunatics, *and the conditions as to payment and accommodation under which private patients may be admitted into and detained in the asylum*, and the regulations when approved by the Lord Lieutenant with or without modifications shall have full effect, *and shall have the same effect for the purposes of the fourth section of the Lunatic Asylums (Ireland) Act, 1875, as if made by the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council.*”

The power is conceded under the first of these amendments by which county asylums will be able to receive paying patients on reasonable business terms. The old Privy Council Rules laid down that no patient was to be charged a larger