

Some years ago a physician informed us that his father, a medical man, was dining on one occasion at the same table as Napoleon, and that during the dinner he had a distinctly epileptic attack.

The Zierenberg Case.

Nothing would now be gained by an elaborate account of the Zierenberg case, or a justification of the verdict at which the jury arrived. Although it is probable that the plaintiffs suffered from the interposition of the Long Vacation between their case and that of the defendant, for the jury would naturally remember most vividly what they heard last, and although the terms of the libel in *Truth* were, perhaps, at some points stronger than the evidence warranted, it is impossible to doubt that the verdict was a right one. It is clear (1) that the plaintiffs were coarse, ignorant, and interested people, utterly unfit to have the care of inebriates, and (2) that the *régime* of the St. James's Home reproduced many of the worst abuses of the old asylum system which Lord Shaftesbury, who, by a strange irony of fortune, was once its President, did so much to destroy—the want of scientific or even rational classification, and the ancient, weary round of seclusion, harsh words, and blows. The reflections which the case suggests are not unimportant. It is obvious that voluntary “retreats” of this description ought to be made subject to Government inspection. It is out of the question to suppose that men of affairs like Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Aberdeen, and Mr. Samuel Morley can exercise any effective supervision over institutions of this character, or that their names are sufficient hostages to the public for their proper administration. Again, one cannot fail to observe that the disclosures in the Zierenberg case amply warrant Mr. Asquith's recent remarks to the deputation which pressed upon him the need for an amendment to the Inebriates' Acts, as to the caution with which the principle of compulsory sequestration has to be adopted and applied. It was stated in evidence that one patient at least was brought to the Zierenberg Home by a chimney sweep. It may be (Mr. Labouchere himself was, we believe, the author of the suggestion) that a contingent drawn from this humble, though deserving, section of the industrial community might profitably be added to the ranks

of our "hereditary legislators." But we have no desire to see its members, or, indeed, the members of any other class, without the special qualifications of knowledge and responsibility, left free to act as the arbiters of the liberty of habitual drunkards.

THE ASYLUM CHAPLAIN'S COLUMN.

" Ut Co-operatores simus."

[The following paper addresses itself to a chaplain's qualifications, particularly in dealing with the idiosyncrasies of patients.—EDS.]

The Asylum Chaplain " Ministering to the Mind Diseased."
By Rev. P. T. SYRÉE, County Asylum, Chartham Down,
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The first and altogether indispensable qualification for the work of the minister of Religion is, and must ever be, that his heart and soul are absorbed in his work. All the learning of the schools would be of no avail, and yet all possible knowledge of both men and things could find ample scope in that interesting and all-embracing field of service, the very "labour of love!" But if the heart-service of any religious minister of the Gospel is so all-important a requisite for the due performance of the daily duties of the ordinary parish priest, yet more is it so in the case of him whose daily duty, nay, whose great privilege it is to "minister to the mind diseased," and unless the heart be really and truly in his work he can be of little, if any, good service to the mentally afflicted. Such a sad condition would prove a most prolific source of unhappiness and unprofitableness all round. "Can the blind lead the blind?" It is an old-established truth that no two persons are totally and unmistakably alike! Even so is it a moral fact that no two characters agree in every particular; and yet more, this thought brings me to the most interesting consideration of the whole matter, viz., the psychical condition of the insane, which is as varied as the physical and moral states of ordinary mortals. *Quot homines tot sententiæ.* The asylum chaplain, whose heart and soul are really and truly in the work, will make it his daily study to fathom the psychical conditions of his afflicted flock, so as to find ways and means and opportuni-