

Sir William Harcourt's Departmental Commission reported in 1882 (par. 12, 7th Report), "That the existing laws relating to criminal lunatics in England and Wales are very complicated and perplexing, and that it is most desirable to consolidate and amend them," we have had two contributions towards the attainment of this end. First came the Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884, a useful, though most imperfect instalment of consolidation and amendment. And then after an interval of twelve years the Legislature actually took courage to provide (in the Short Titles Act, 1896) a general name, "The Criminal Lunatics Acts, 1880-1884," for all the statutes in which the law on this subject is embodied. The work is, however, to all intents and purposes still undone. It would be ludicrous, if it were not positively mischievous, that a person wishing to discover the state of the criminal lunacy law should have to consult first two sections in a half repealed Act of Geo. III., then an Act of 1838, then another of 1840, next a statute of 1851, after that an Act of 1860, and finish up his investigations by a study of the Trial of Lunatics Act, 1883, and the Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884. Moreover, much of the machinery in the earlier Acts is quite archaic. Look at the provisions for the protection of the Sovereign's person in Sec. 4 of 39 and 40 Geo. III., c. 94. Or take the cumbrous description of the procedure to be adopted in Scotland and Ireland under the Lunatics Removal (India) Act, 1851. It is simply disgraceful that such lumber should be allowed to overload the statute book. All the really vital operative provisions in the Criminal Lunatics Acts, 1880-1884, could be comprised in a Bill of 50 sections. In the present stage of legal and medical opinion on the subject, any attempt to incorporate the law of criminal responsibility in the Bill would wreck its chances of passing. But we should at least be glad to see some check imposed upon the power, too frequently exercised of late years, of the Home Secretary to remit prisoners becoming lunatic before arraignment direct to a criminal lunatic asylum without judicial inquiry.

The Asylum News.

The new Journal of the Association of Asylum Workers has commenced its existence with a January number for the present year. In welcoming the new-comer we may reiterate our

hopes already expressed, that it may be of real use and help to asylum workers, and may be successful in avoiding the difficulties which usually beset a young publication.

The objects of the Association are briefly stated, as the improvement of the status of asylum nurses and attendants; to secure the sympathy and co-operation of those interested in institutional work; and, lastly, to provide Homes of Rest for those engaged in asylums.

Homes of Rest would be very useful without doubt, although some may assert that the Asylum Committees already deal liberally with their sick attendants. One difficulty in connection with the establishment of such homes would result from the wide area over which the members of the Association are scattered, rendering the cost of travel somewhat expensive.

The names of a considerable number of County Asylum Superintendents are printed as supporting the Association, but their names are rather conspicuous by their absence from the list of the Executive Committee. It would be interesting to know if this is an intentional arrangement and the reasons if that is really the case.

The financial statement is satisfactory, showing a balance of nearly a hundred pounds in hand and a membership of two thousand. We do not learn whether the *News* is to be monthly or quarterly, but we note that it is printed and published at the Lancaster County Asylum through the generosity of Dr. Cassidy.

No information is given as to the limitation of membership; whether an attendant is eligible the moment he (or she) is engaged in an asylum, or whether the membership continues after leaving asylum service; whether indeed the Association exercises or professes to exercise any power of selection, or whether every employé of an asylum, however little experienced in the care of the insane, is, by the fact of his employment, entitled to membership. These and many other enquiries that suggest themselves will probably receive solution in the coming numbers of the *Asylum News*, to which we shall assuredly look forward with interest.

Sanitary Science Scholarship at Claybury.

All alienist physicians will rejoice at the decision of the Technical Education Board of the London County Council to give a scholarship in Sanitary Science, tenable in the Patho-