

## THE INTERNATIONAL CATALOGUE OF SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

All the arrangements for the international catalogue of scientific literature are now complete. The work of cataloguing has begun, and it is intended to include in the catalogue all the literature published after January 1st, 1901. The Royal Society will act as the publishers of the catalogue, and a code of instructions for the use of all those who are taking part in the preparation of the catalogue has been drawn up. The catalogue will be issued under the superintendence of an executive committee consisting of four delegates of the Royal Society—Sir Michael Foster, Professor A. W. Rücker, Professor H. E. Armstrong, and Dr. Ludwig Mond, and of the representatives of the four largest subscribers to the catalogue—France, Germany, Italy, and the United States.

Full details respecting the work and publication of the index could be obtained by writing to the Director of the Central Bureau of the Catalogue, Dr. H. Foster Morley, 34, 35, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

## THE INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

The English Branch is now being organised with Dr. Edridge-Green as Honorary Secretary. We trust that this important Institute will be widely and generously supported. The *Journal* is now fairly afloat, and promises well. Mr. O. Murray's letter in our last number shows that there is no connection between this Society and the Institute of Psychical Science which was referred to in the *JOURNAL* for October. Dr. Edridge-Green has sent us the subjoined circular letter:

"It has been proposed to form a branch for England of the International Psychological Institute.

"It is remarkable that the subject of experimental psychology has, until later years, been almost entirely neglected, as every scientific investigation must be modified by the personal peculiarities of the observer. An obvious example of this is to be found in a colour-blind person, by whom it is impossible to judge of the merits of colour in a picture, however striking they may be. So much has the subject been neglected that we are quite unable to answer even such a simple question as whether the power of a perceptive centre can be improved by long practice, or to what extent the perceptions vary at different periods of life! The immediate advantage to education of the knowledge of these facts is evident. All men assume (and only after demonstration recognise that it is not so) that the perceptions of others are similar to those experienced by themselves, and it is of very great importance to knowledge to ascertain the exact manner in which these perceptions differ.

"The Society will not be limited to the Medical Profession, as it has hoped that other scientific men in allied branches of knowledge will join, so that the investigation of any definite fact may be as thorough as possible, and that the subject may be viewed from every possible side.

"The chief object of the Society is to facilitate, in a purely scientific manner, the experimental study of psychology and of psychical phenomena, by the installation of laboratories, equipped with suitable apparatus (biometers, magnetometers, spectrosopes, registering instruments, photographic apparatus, etc.), and also by the creation of a periodical, which shall publish accounts of the experiments made in the laboratories, with their results, and the writings of collaborators interested in psychical studies.

"It might be added that this fascinating study can be pursued by any person in any place, as introspective experiments can always be carried out without the aid of elaborately equipped laboratories; but at the same time it will be obvious to anyone interested in the same that the establishment of those same laboratories, with their valuable scientific instruments at the disposal of all researchers, will accomplish much which would otherwise be impossible; while the value of the journal will be very great.

"Should you feel disposed to give your support to this Society, I should be glad to hear from you on the subject, and would forward you the *Journal* and all further particulars. The annual subscription is one guinea, and at present there

is no entrance fee. The meetings of the English Branch will be held in London, and there will be Congresses in Paris every few years."

#### PUNISHMENT OF WEAK-MINDED PRISONERS.

We find the following paragraphs in the Annual Report of the Howard Association for the year 1900:

"There was lately laid before the Howard Association a detailed and serious complaint, which appeared to carry some evidence of being, at least in part, founded upon fact. It related to the punishments of bread and water inflicted, under existing rules, upon prisoners certified as '*weak-minded*,' '*epileptic*,' or '*insane*,' and it complained of a number of such punishments being repeatedly inflicted upon a few individuals, whose names and circumstances were given.

"On the matter being brought by the Howard Association before the Prison Commissioners, the latter thoroughly investigated the case, and communicated to the Association, in full detail, the results obtained.

"The Committee, from their own previous acquaintance with the management of the prison in question, had good reason to believe that no charge of inhumanity could be attached to the *personal* action of the local authorities—but the very reverse.

"And the investigation afresh confirmed that impression. For it was found that, out of the class of '*weak-minded*' inmates of the establishment, considerably more than half had not been reported once, for any misbehaviour, during a period of six months. It was also shown that the officers in charge of that class treated them kindly, as well as firmly.

"But the important point which the investigation in question did *not* disprove was this—the fact that the *existing rules impose it* as a duty upon the officers to punish partially or wholly *insane* and epileptic prisoners for such offences as '*foul language*,' for example; and that such punishments amount *occasionally*, but not often, to from thirteen to fifteen days on bread and water, during a year.

"No question is here raised as to *sane* prisoners, or wilful and responsible offenders. The Howard Association's Committee have never taken the view that prisoners are to be pampered, or to be exempted from justly penal treatment.

"But with the wish to make every allowance for the difficulties of administration, and with a hearty and thankful recognition of the great improvement which has taken place of late years in the *personnel* of British prison management, the Committee cannot but feel that the existing *rules* and *prescribed system* impose an unduly harsh *régime* upon the particular class of '*weak-minded*,' who are not only partially insane, but some of whom are admitted to be actually so.

"In well-conducted asylums, and even in *Criminal Lunatic Asylums* (as *distinct* from prisons), a reasonable latitude is rightly allowed in regard, for example, to foul language. Recently, whilst the Secretary of the Howard Association was walking around the Scotch CRIMINAL LUNATIC ASYLUM at PERTH, in company with the Governor, one of the inmates accosted the latter in an offensive manner, bordering on the '*foul*' or obscene. But no notice was taken of it, and the offender quietly walked away. All around, in the same yard, were murderers and other insane persons of violent and dangerous habits. But they are treated, at least with regard to *language*, with that wise consideration which makes allowance for their natural lack of self-restraint, or for their irresponsibility, except where actual injury to others might result. Tact and kindness, with firmness and admonition, or even silent disregard for verbal breaches of order, suffice to maintain good discipline, and, indeed, to promote it far better than by dietary and other punishments. Similar wisdom characterises the administration of the other Criminal Lunatic Asylums, namely, Broadmoor in England, and Dundrum in Ireland.

"Hence it may fairly be urged upon the authorities that prisoners who are, after competent medical examination and observation, pronounced to be '*weak-minded*' or epileptic (and certainly those who are insane) should, if retained at all in a prison, be governed by the rules, and in the manner, of Lunatic Asylums.

"This matter requires the serious consideration of the Commissioners of Prisons and also of the Home Secretary."