

who is apparently a thorough-going optimist, urges the desirability of accelerating human progress to perfection by a system of artificial selection involving the sterilisation of the degenerate. He thinks it preferable that women should be the victims of this system, and he exhorts his gynæcological hearers to devise new and safer operations to this end.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

*On Reform of the Lunacy Law [Juristische Briefe; VI. Zur Reform der Irrengesetzgebung]. (Allgem. österreich. Gerichts-Zeitung, 1901.) Benedikt.*

The author considers that the present time is favourable for bringing the provisions of the criminal and civil law into better accord with modern views of insanity. He touches on most of the aspects of lunacy legislation, and suggests various reforms in principle and procedure. He particularly emphasises the need of fuller recognition by the law of the pathological element in the criminal nature; the practical corollary of this admission should be the establishment of asylums for criminal lunatics, and of other special institutions intermediate between the prison and the asylum for degenerates and weak-minded criminals.

With regard to the general question of the relation of society to the lunatic, the author thinks that the law might define those mental conditions which are to be reckoned as distinctly insane, and which may be considered sufficient grounds for committal to an asylum. On this point Dr. Benedikt has the courage of his convictions, and does not recoil from the attempt to enumerate these conditions. His list includes: (1) hallucinations; (2) illusions; (3) states of excitement with actions dependent on hallucinations and illusions; (4) mania; (5) simple melancholia; (6) melancholia with delusions; (7) confusion (*Verwirrtheit*); and (8) dementia. The law should impose on medical men the duty of notifying cases of insanity (as defined in this list) to the proper authorities, who can then decide the further steps—committal to an asylum, home treatment, etc.,—which may be desirable in the individual instance.

Inebriety, sexual perversions, and similar conditions Benedikt would have expressively recognised in law as distinct from insanity; the individuals presenting these vicious tendencies should not be deemed irresponsible, but should be subjected to a modified penal discipline in special institutions.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

*The Total Abstinence Question [Zur Abstinenzfrage]. (Wien. med. Presse, No. 14, 1901.) Benedikt.*

Dr. Benedikt has been moved to wrath by the recent progress of the theory, especially current in the experimental school of psychologists, that even small doses of alcohol act injuriously on mental function. Anticipating that this heresy would be supported by the Vienna Anti-alcoholist Congress, he has accordingly confided to the columns of the *Wiener medizinische Presse*, with a perhaps excessive candour, his opinion of the doctrine and its advocates. The latter are, in the professor's view, for the most part a lot of "young-lady-like idealists,"