

*Irish Lunacy Law.*

The Psychology Section of the British Medical Association will not have met in Dublin in vain if the protest which it made against the Lunacy Law in Ireland leads to an alteration in some existing enactments. If in England we are in danger of suffering from over-cooking in legislation, it is very clear that the provisions hitherto placed upon the table of the Legislature relative to the insane in Ireland have been underdone. The result is an indigestible mess, which causes serious disorder in the practical working of the legal formalities required in the admission of patients into asylums and in the management of these institutions. We commend to our readers the paper on this subject, read by Dr. Oscar Woods at the above Section.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted at the meeting of the Section, Aug. 5, 1887:—

“The Psychology Section of the British Medical Association, having had under consideration during their meeting in Dublin (Aug., 1887) the Irish Lunacy Laws and their practical working, and having strongly felt their grave defects when compared with those of England and Scotland, conclude to bring the subject under the consideration of the Council of the Association in the hope that they will take such steps as seem desirable to bring under the attention of the Government the urgent need of better regulations, and, if necessary, of further legislation with regard to the matter.

“The chief defects are the following:—

“1. The modes of admission of patients into asylums, which often involve injustice and injury to the patient, and great danger to the public.

“2. The defective powers possessed by the medical superintendent for the proper and efficient management of the asylum, *e.g.*, his having no power to engage or to dismiss the attendants, on whose loyal discharge of duty the welfare of the patients so greatly depends.

“3. The want in the majority of cases of assistant medical officers, so that the medical superintendent is unable to give the necessary time to his strictly medical duties, and large asylums, containing some hundreds of lunatics, may be left entirely without resident medical supervision when the superintendent is absent.”