

very promptly formed if they are to cope with the number of cases that will probably require detention very early after the bill comes into operation on the 1st of January next. The number of habitual inebriates coming periodically before the courts is very considerable, and if these are at once dealt with under the Act the existing accommodation would be utterly inadequate.

The application of the powers given by the Act, although very full and extensive, will no doubt give rise to many questions of difficulty, and we shall watch the progress of its use with interest. The Act promises to prevent a very large amount of suffering at present inflicted by the habitual drunkards on their families without check or hope of redress, and there can be little doubt that beyond this there may follow a considerable reduction of casual inebriates. The popular mind will soon recognise that the law regards drunkenness as criminal, and this, it may be confidently predicted, will result in drunkenness being considered, not as a harmless indulgence, but as a moral offence against law and order—a result greatly to be desired.

The Lunacy Bill.

The Lunacy Bill of the past session, after passing the Lords, was withdrawn in the House of Commons, owing to the lateness of the session.

Time, therefore, still remains to this Association to exert itself in influencing the coming legislation. The late bill, owing to our action and influence, was undoubtedly modified and improved, but much remains to be done, especially in ensuring a favourable reception of the pension clauses, in the House of Commons. In this direction individual members can do much in putting the special claims of the specialty in this respect before those members of Parliament with whom they are associated in any way. The bill will almost certainly pass next session, and if this opportunity is missed, many years will probably elapse before another is offered.

The Law of Settlement.

(The Plymouth v. Axminster Guardians.)

This case before the House of Lords was an appeal from an order of the Court of Appeal affirming an order of the

Recorder of Plymouth on a case stated by him. The question in dispute was whether a female pauper lunatic was settled in the appellants' union. The lunatic was born at Plymouth, but had gained no settlement of her own; her mother, a single woman, was born in the defendants' union, and had acquired no settlement.

Although the mother probably had a derivative settlement from her father, the Recorder decided that this could not be inquired into, and that the settlement of the lunatic was in the appellant's union in which she was born.

• Lord Herschel gave judgment in support of this decision. He expressed the opinion that the limitation of inquiry into derivative settlements was intended by the Act to prevent the undue expenditure which such inquiries led to.

The righteousness of the decision is shown, for the cost of a disputed inquiry into the settlement of the grandparent of a lunatic might easily amount to more than the cost of the maintenance of the lunatic for many years. Decisions such as this, which limit the possibilities of litigation, are to be hailed with satisfaction by all interested in the true economy of poor law administration.

Lunacy Certificates.

Are two medical certificates necessary for a "not a pauper," lunacy case? The *Lancet* (July 30th, 1898) draws attention to a statement made by a correspondent that "the justices of his district are in the habit of signing removal orders for lunatics of the working and artisan class on one medical certificate only."

This action can only be taken under section 18 of the Lunacy Act, and on that portion of it which justifies the signing of an order on the ground that the person is "in such circumstances as to require relief for his proper care."

Section 13, clause 2, however, provides that in the case of lunatics not under proper control two medical certificates shall be obtained.

The question would appear to rest on the manner in which the justice is to determine whether the lunatic is "in such circumstances as to require relief for his proper care;" but in regard to the decision of this no guidance is given.

Justice demands that the presumably "not a pauper" lunatic should have the benefit of the doubt, and the advantage accruing from double certification would seem to be