

OCCASIONAL NOTES OF THE QUARTER.

Lunacy Act, 1890.

We draw the special attention of our readers to the paper by Dr. Percy Smith, read at the November Meeting of the Association, on the defective working in practice of the Lunacy Act, 1890. It will be found among the "Original Articles," and the discussion upon it in "Notes and News." The article is at once so forcible from its array of indisputable facts, and so temperate in tone, that it can hardly fail to convince those who introduced and sanctioned this legislation that the result has, in some respects at least, proved cumbrous, mischievously complex, and unworkable, except at the expense of endless worry, waste of time, and wearisomeness of the flesh to the friends of patients, and injurious to the best interests of the latter, in consequence of the delay, alarm, and in some instances dangerous exposure to the weather while being carried hither and thither, from pillar to post, in order to discover a qualified justice, and, if qualified, willing and able to sign the reception order. It is not necessary, however, to discuss the Act in this place; it must suffice to refer the readers of the Journal to the above-mentioned articles and discussion.

The Value of the Evidence of the Insane.

A case which has recently been tried before the Recorder of Dublin and a jury forms a subject for the serious consideration, not only of the members of the Medico-Psychological Association, but of all those who are associated with the care and control of the insane. Hitherto we have always considered that if the medical superintendent of an asylum was satisfied by the evidence of patients upon whose word he knew he could rely, that an attendant had been guilty of undue harshness or cruelty towards a patient, he would be perfectly justified in suspending that attendant and bringing the matter under the notice of his committee, who would either make the attendant's discharge absolute, or reinstate him if upon investigation the circumstances of the case were found to warrant it.

The case, however, to which we wish to draw especial attention at once and in no uncertain fashion, at any rate as far as