

important question is that of boarding out of lunatics. In Ireland there is no such power. In England and Scotland the power exists, and is very much used, especially in Scotland. We are of opinion that facilities for boarding out patients ought to be extended to Ireland."

"That we are of opinion that lunacy administration in Ireland should be assimilated to that of England and Scotland as regards the establishment of a lunacy commission in this country."

The former is probably what is the fashion to call rather too large an order; the latter slightly too vague; both of them rather pertaining to a lunacy regulation Bill than to a local government Bill. Neither met any response from Government, but they are, we hope, to be regarded as signs that some healthy interest is felt in lunacy affairs in Ireland. Such interest is badly wanted. Nothing is more singular than the little interest or intelligence shown by the majority of the Irish members in the debates on the lunacy clauses in this Bill. Some of them used these sections as a mere excuse for personally reviling the Inspectors of Lunatics and the officials of the Board of Control. Others fell foul of asylums generally, and seemed to have been briefed by the Society of Imputed Lunatics. The most ridiculous blunders as to matters of fact were made on all sides. Even the Chief Secretary is reported by all the Irish newspapers as having spoken of the Treasury rate in aid of 4s. 2d. per week per head, which is really only 4s.

We hope before the Irish Lunacy Act comes which we have been so long hearing about, but which appears as far off as ever, the Irish public will be somewhat educated as to the requirements of the case, and further that the state of Irish politics will be such that Irish parliamentarians will be able to afford a little time and consideration to a subject which is not perhaps showy, but is of vast importance to a large and very pitiable class of their countrymen.

Habitual Inebriates Bill.

The progress which this Bill has made does not justify any expectation that it will become law in the present session of Parliament, and so for still another year these unfortunates may be permitted to drink themselves into criminality, lunacy, or the grave, as accident shall determine.

The Bill provides that an habitual drunkard, convicted of

crime, may be sentenced to not more than three years in any State inebriate reformatory, &c., this being in addition to, or in substitution of any other sentence. Should this become law, there can be little doubt that it will act as a powerful deterrent to incipient drunken habit, and, it may be hoped, prove a curative measure in a certain number of instances.

The Bill further provides for the establishment of State inebriate reformatories and of certified inebriate reformatories in which such treatment may be carried out.

Any habitual drunkard who has been four times convicted of drunkenness within twelve months shall also be liable to detention for a term not exceeding three years in an inebriate reformatory. This provision, if it ever becomes law, will most certainly arrest the development of those chronic "drunks," whose appearances before the magistrates are to be reckoned in hundreds.

The Bill, however, has little chance of becoming law, even in so quiet a session as the present, and we can only express the regret that while legislation affecting special interests, of railways, banks, &c., is comparatively easy, it is still so difficult to pass a Bill which affects only the general interest of the community.

Criminal Evidence Bill.

This Bill, marking a very wide departure in our law of evidence, is so far advanced that there is every probability of its becoming law in the present session, but probably its clauses will yet undergo such considerable modification as to render criticism of its existing form unnecessary.

The admission of the evidence of criminally accused persons and of the husband and wife will, without doubt, affect considerably the plea of insanity in such cases. Many speculations might be indulged in with regard to the manner in which it will act in this respect; but probably in the question of insanity, as well as in that of criminality, the extension of the scope of evidence will help to a greater approximation to the truth, and thereby to justice, than that attained when the evidence of the most important witnesses was inadmissible.

The exact conditions and limitations of such evidence must, however, be defined before any satisfactory opinion can be expressed on the manner in which it will affect the plea of insanity, but it is easy to foresee that many interesting questions will arise in this connection.