

Correspondence.

"SOME POINTS IN IRISH LUNACY LAW."

District Asylum, Sligo,
12th January, 1886.

GENTLEMEN,—I quote from the above paper, which appears in your last issue:—

"The magistrates issue a warrant ordering the patient's admission to the asylum, where he is then conveyed by two policemen. To those who are not familiar with these functionaries, it may be mentioned that policemen in Ireland usually go about fully armed, and are more like riflemen than English constables."

On the 24th April, 1877, the Inspector-General of Constabulary in Ireland issued a circular, in which the order is given: "In future, all escorts with lunatics are to carry truncheons only."

I draw attention to this because Dr. Norman read his paper to an English audience.

Faithfully yours,
JOSEPH PETIT,
Res. Med. Supt.

The Editors "Journal of Mental Science."

712, Lexington Ave.,
New York, January 13th, 1886.

TO THE EDITORS OF *The Journal of Mental Science.*

GENTLEMEN,—Your reviewer of Dr. Westcott's book on Suicide says ("Journal of Mental Science," January, 1886, p. 566) that "in the United States suicide is not and never has been regarded in the light of a crime against statute laws." This is not strictly correct—to-day, at least. The new, and in many features brutal, code of Criminal Laws of the State of New York, sometimes spoken of as the "Field Code," makes of suicide a "felony," punishable by imprisonment, fine, or both. This is the law to-day in the largest State of the Union.

With regard to its practical working, the following may interest the readers of the "Journal of Mental Science":—There has been in the City and County of New York but one conviction under the new law (now in operation over three years). This was in the case of a person who was not a suicide in any sense, having jumped out of a row-boat in the frenzy of acute alcoholic intoxication, and innumerable would-be suicides have been arrested since then, but in no other instance could a judge or prosecuting officer be found to push the case to its bitter end. The person convicted had had the misfortune of jumping into the water too soon after the adoption of the New Code to escape. A week later the provision relating to suicide became, and has to this day remained, a dead letter.

Respectfully yours,
E. C. SPITZKA.

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