

The Law and Insane Murderers.

The legal procedure in cases of homicide by certified lunatics seems to be now clearly established in Scotland. Two murders occurred in two Scottish asylums last summer. The patients were dealt with in the same way. On intimation to the Procurator-Fiscal they were brought before the Sheriff, who, being assured of their mental unsoundness, remitted them to the higher courts. On their appearance there the advocate for the Crown intimated that they were insane, and led evidence to that effect by calling expert witnesses. The judge immediately ordered the lunatics to be removed to the Lunatics' Department of the Perth Prison and there confined during her Majesty's pleasure.

THE ENLARGEMENT OF RAINHILL ASYLUM.

We regret to observe that the Lancashire Asylums Board have decided to provide additional "temporary" accommodation at Rainhill for 200 patients. It is to be hoped that these buildings will be really temporary, and that the Board will remove them as soon as possible. The evils of these overgrown institutions have been so often the subject of unfavourable comment that we refrain from further remarks at present, except to express sympathy with Dr. Wigglesworth in having this unwelcome addition thrust upon him. We certainly cannot agree with Mr. Turner in his reported remarks to the effect that, as in a very short time the lunacy requirements of the county would be such as to occupy all the permanent provision that the Board anticipated making, as many of the asylums as could should make temporary accommodation. If the requirements transcend the possibilities under the arrangements now completed, it seems to us high time that the question of further permanent provision should be faced.

EDINBURGH DISTRICT LUNACY BOARD.

An important report upon asylums on the Continent and in England has been prepared by a committee of the Edinburgh District Lunacy Board, in view of the proposed new asylum for Edinburgh. It is a document of special interest to those interested in the provision of accommodation for the insane, and especially to us as an expression of opinion in regard to recent methods of asylum construction set forth by a body of gentlemen who approach the subject with open minds. The deputation returned impressed with the conviction that the asylum at Alt Scherbitz was the best they had seen, and that Edinburgh should adopt that system. The estate of Wester Bangour, near Uphall, extending to 861 acres, has been purchased for £13,000; and the District Board have resolved to construct their institution on the villa system, at an expense of some £150,000. We understand that the plans will be open to a limited competition, and we shall watch the development of this important hospital with great interest.

"THE GROWTH OF INSANITY IN SCOTLAND."

An article under this heading, "contributed" to *The Scotsman* of 8 December, 1897, draws attention to the existence of "crazy" areas in Scotland.

Thus, while the ratio of the insane in Scotland generally for the 1895 quinquenniad was 27.1 per 10,000, this is described as rising to 90 per 10,000 in the parishes in Argyllshire, but the writer does not draw attention to the fact that in the twenty-five remaining parishes the ratio must, on his own showing, fall below the average.