

MENTAL SUFFERING.

A case of an unusual character came before the Leicester borough magistrates lately, when a commercial traveller was charged with causing mental suffering to his four children by threatening and neglecting them. The prosecution was instituted by the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Children. The evidence showed that the defendant for three months had done no work, and had been almost continuously intoxicated. He threatened his children with violence, and the medical evidence showed that the children had suffered in their nervous system through fear on account of the threats of violence; but the defendant had never actually struck them, as they were protected by his wife. The Bench sentenced him to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

We quote this as corroborative of Dr. Macdonald's position in regard to alcoholism as a cause of insanity, as reported in this number of the *JOURNAL*. In this case a drunkard subjects his family to privations and incalculable mental stress. We congratulate the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Children on their activity in the matter.

L'INTERMÉDIARE DES NEUROLOGISTES ET DES ALIENISTES.

We are favoured with the prospectus of a new journal which is to be printed in French, English, and German. It is designed to be a medium for the exchange of ideas on subjects connected with our department, principally in the form of notes and queries. The questions and answers are to be classed under the headings Neurology, Psychiatry, and Psycho-physiology. The most recent discoveries and theories will be recorded with references to original articles, and summaries of current knowledge will be published from time to time. The various congresses and meetings of learned societies in connection with these matters will be duly noticed in detail. We heartily commend this new departure, and hope that it will be widely supported by our readers. The subscription is only 7 fr. 50 per annum for the monthly issue, which will be published by Félix Alcan, 108, Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM DR. J. SANDERSON CHRISTISON.

The last issue of your esteemed *JOURNAL* contains what purports to be a "review" of my brochure, *Crime and Criminals*, and which contains such a sweeping condemnation and gross misrepresentation of my little book, that in justice both to myself and the readers of the *JOURNAL* I ask permission for a brief reply.

The "reviewer" first observes that it "is not a scientific work," while he in no way indicates that it is not, although he quotes two or three fragments of sentences which probably do not correspond with his views. He fails to observe what is stated in the preface, that the book was written for the general reader, and consequently the subject-matter is presented in a form and manner calculated to interest the public. He also says that it "is conceived in execrable American-English, and teems with slang words redolent of the Bowery;" but he fails to mention that the slang terms are quotations from the prisoners, and given as such to better indicate their meanings, which are often much easier understood than defined.

The "reviewer" flatly denies the truth of my statement that "crimes are now nearly five times as numerous as forty years ago," but he omits to say that I base the statement upon the official statistics of the United States, and thus refer to America only. I am aware that English statistics show a decrease of crime in late years. In America the ratio of incarcerated criminals to the general population was—for 1850, 1 to 3'442; 1860, 1 to 1'647; 1870, 1 to 1'171; 1880, 1 to '850; 1890, 1 to '757.