they adopt the gas is liberated under pressure from a mixture of equal parts of formaldehyde and 20 per cent. calcium chloride solution. They use an apparatus made by the Sanitary Construction Company of New York. They say "we found it was advisable to use larger quantities of formaldehyde than are generally advised, and our results, at first disappointing, became very satisfactory upon using one pound of formaldehyde per 1000 cubic feet."

Dr. Rambaut, of the Richmond Asylum, Dublin, tells us that experiments which he made last autumn by culture methods gave strong proofs of the value of formalin as a sterilising agent, the apparatus used in that institution being Trillat's for the generation of formic aldehyde vapour under pressure from an aqueous 30 per cent. solution of formaldehyde, free from methyl alcohol, containing calcium chloride in solution, and known in trade as formochlorol.

Chargeability of Irish Lunatics.

The methods which Irishmen adopt for seeking redress of grievances are probably beyond the comprehension of any other people.

We mentioned in the January number of this Journal that the Governors of the Richmond Asylum and the Guardians of the two Dublin workhouses contemplated requesting the Chief Secretary for Ireland to introduce provisions effecting a law of settlement into his new Local Government Bill. A deputation, representing the three bodies in question, accordingly waited upon Mr. Gerald Balfour on January 18th. This deputation added to its original programme a request that the Treasury rate in aid should be increased from 4*s.* per head per week to some larger but unspecified sum, and this although it would appear from a subsequent correspondence in the newspapers that the Chief Secretary "had written to say that the speakers must confine their remarks to the question of 'the deportation and chargeability of lunatics.'" One member of the deputation, being a prominent poor-law guardian, struck new ground by complaining that the lunatics were not taken proper care of. It turned out that he meant the lunatics in the workhouses; and while nobody denied the justice of this confession, its pertinency to the question at issue is by no means clear. Another speaker boldly suggested that the Treasury should contribute half the expense of maintenance, and that the other half should be levied by

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.44.185.331 Published online by Cambridge University Press

a national as distinguished from a local rate. This suggestion, by the way, left the grievance of deportation of Irish-born lunatics from England and Scotland untouched. One gentleman dwelt at much length on the expense which the district was put to by the erection of a new asylum.

The speakers do not seem to have agreed beforehand as to the matters to be discussed, or the proposals to be made, and they do not appear to have had professional advice, either medical or legal.

The natural result ensued. The Chief Secretary pitted the arguments of one against those of another, and gave no satisfaction to any one. Talking apparently on the assumption that the expenses of maintenance in the Richmond district were higher than anywhere else in Ireland, he recommended economy. As for improving the condition of the workhouse lunatic, that would, of course, cause increased expenditure, which all parties seemed to deprecate. He disclaimed any intention of increasing the Treasury grant. As for widening the area of taxation for the maintenance of lunatics by nationalising the rate, he slyly pointed out that such a proposal, if accepted, would have the result that local government, as regards that particular function, would have no *raison d'être*. He was not sympathetic with regard to framing a law of settlement, thought the absence of such a law was on the whole an advantage, and disliked the idea of altering the simplicity of the law in Ireland in respect of this matter. Obviously he was unwilling to burden his Bill with a subject which does not necessarily belong to local government as such.

The Government and Lunatic Asylums.

Under the above heading there appeared in a Dublin daily paper on the 4th of February the remarkable report which, with slight abbreviation, we subjoin. We should premise that Granard is a Poor Law Union in the County of Longford, and that the County of Longford is portion of the district of the Mullingar Asylum.

At the Granard Board of Guardians meeting, Mr. A. E. Edgeworth, D.L., said he would like to propose a resolution which he had been requested to bring forward, and one which would be a matter of pleasing consequences to the ratepayers. It was a resolution to the effect that the Government be asked to take over the Irish asylums in the same way as they have taken over the

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.44.185.331 Published online by Cambridge University Press