

MEDICAL CRITICISM.

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2ND SERIES.

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THE REPUTEDLY INSANE.

A case, of which we hear, on reliable authority, is one of a character which appears to us to require greater precaution than is at present exercised, to prevent its recurrence ; it is that of a farmer who, by dint of hard toil, had amassed some money, and appears to have concluded that he was more likely to take care of it, than were sons with "new lights" on agriculture, etc.; the sons, for their part, appear to be among the basest of the race, as they and their mother availed themselves of the horrid device (a by no means new one) of plotting against their father's liberty, by means of falsely charging him with being insane ; two doctors were consequently brought to the house, ostensibly to testify to this man's insanity ; one of them entered into conversation with him on the subject of farming, while the other remained in the kitchen ; the second doctor did not converse with him ; as the subject of this plot was told of it on the previous day, he refused to yield to it, until he had seen a physician of this city, who has known him for 25 years, and testifies to his being as sane as himself is ; it is from this physician that we hear of the case ; It appears to us that the law which enables any designing person to imprison another on the testimony of two doctors, (one of whom it appears may not happen to speak to him) should be amended without delay ; we think a lawyer, who is necessarily accustomed to evidence, is better qualified to examine a man as to his sanity, than is an average doctor ; we also think the public is entitled to know if the Inspector of asylums sees the several patients, and if consequently we have any sufficient guarantee against this kind of imprisonment under false pretences.

THE DEATH RATE.

Communicated by Dr. T. W. Sparrow.

Notwithstanding the fact that much has been done to improve the sanitary condition of the city of New York, the death-rate of the inhabitants continues to advance. A table of statistics just published, shows that in 1880 there were 23,342 deaths ; in 1881 there were 28,624 ; and in 1882 there were 37,826 ; the increase in the number of births has been gradual and natural, there being 25,573 in 1880, 26,130 in 1881, and 27,321 in 1882 ; the number of marriages shows a corresponding increase, being 8446 in 1880, 10,079 in 1881, and 11,085 in 1882 ; a writer, referring to the above-indicated facts, remarks—" Here is a subject of study for scientists, in order to discover the cause of the increased mortality in the largest American city, and to suggest means for its prevention." In Ontario, during the ten years terminating in 1880, upwards of 321,000 deaths occurred ; in the latter year 44,000 !—The statistics show that half this appalling number died under the age of twenty ! The Registrar General of the Province, in referring to this melan-