

that only Catholic patients were to be sent to the auxiliary. The house built for a doctor had been handed over as a residence for the chaplain. The resident medical superintendent of the Cork Asylum had not been refused permission to visit the auxiliary asylum, but the committee of management had passed resolutions taking away from the resident medical superintendent all responsibility for the discipline and domestic management of the auxiliary. The committee had been informed that these resolutions were illegal, and had been called upon to correct such illegality."—*The Irish Times*, February 24th, 1905.

Our contemporary, the *Medical Press and Circular*, March 1st, 1905, comments as follows upon the above question put and answered in the House of Commons, February 23rd:—

"The matter referred to is a most serious one, and has been discussed at various times in the medical journals during the past couple of years. We are glad to note that the Lord Lieutenant's approval is only 'tentative,' but we do not regard even that as satisfactory. The housing of some hundreds of lunatics, mostly, we believe, epileptics, in an asylum without direct and constant medical control is a distinctly retrograde step. Apart from the fact that the general management of such an institution should be in medical hands, it is absolutely necessary for the safety of the patients themselves that a medical man should always be present in the institution. In case of accident through choking at food, or falling in a fit, or through homicidal attacks—and no insane patients are more likely to develop homicidal tendencies than epileptics—immediate medical attention is required. These facts are so obvious that we entirely fail to understand how the Irish Executive can even for a day sanction the present arrangement.

"Mr. Wyndham suggests the possibility of change 'in the event of the arrangement being found defective.' We suppose what is meant is that when some unfortunate patient's death has occurred for lack of immediate medical care, the Lord Lieutenant will be open to reconsider the matter."

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#### "SLIGO DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUM.

"At the monthly meeting of the governors of the Sligo District Asylum, on February 21st, an application from Dr. Petit, Medical Superintendent, applying for three months' sick leave, was considered. He submitted along with it a certificate from Drs. MacDowel and Martyn to the effect that he was suffering from insomnia, and was totally incapable of discharging his duties. The members of the board bore testimony to Dr. Petit's efficiency and the highly satisfactory discharge of his duties. In fact, as a governor remarked, 'no better man could be got.' But, to encourage the others, they declined to give him the three months' leave recommended by his medical attendants unless he appointed and paid a substitute.

"There was a good deal of speaking as to the necessity in the interests of the institution of a substitute being appointed. We are thoroughly in accord with the governors in this. The asylum could not safely be left in charge of the assistant medical officer. The work would be too much, and the responsibility too serious, for one doctor; but we part company with them when they want to impose the payment on the medical superintendent. The responsibility and strain of so anxious a charge as that of a huge lunatic asylum is very great indeed, and tries the most robust. When a medical superintendent breaks down under the burden it is only just, no matter what his salary is, that the governors should pay his substitute. It is another instance of the ratepayers being trotted out to excuse cruelty and injustice. We very much doubt whether the ratepayers would object to a highly efficient officer, broken down by faithful discharge of his duties toward the most afflicted class of the community, obtaining the requisite rest for restoration of health without being obliged to pay for the discharge of his duty, or, as a governor callously put it, 'If he did not like to do it, he could resign.' This is poor encouragement to medical officers to thorough discharge of their duties."—*Medical Press and Circular*, March 8th, 1905.

To this genial record we have only to add that Dr. Petit has been twenty-three years Medical Superintendent of the Sligo Asylum, and between thirty and forty an Irish asylum officer altogether.

#### MONAGHAN ASYLUM.

From the *Anglo-Celtic* newspaper of February 25th, 1905, published in Cavan, we extract the following account of certain proceedings at the February meeting of the Joint Committee of Management of the Monaghan and Cavan District Asylum. Through considerations of space we have here and there omitted matters that did not seem essential, indicating such omissions by dots.

##### "THE CHARGE AGAINST THE ENGINEER.

"A report was forwarded by the Inspectors of Lunacy, which stated:—On the 8th February, 1905, the inspector of lunatics held an inquiry on oath at the Monaghan District Asylum into a charge made against Mr. Walter Brydon, the engineer, of having, as alleged, made a criminal assault on a female patient named Sarah Beatty. . . . Mr. Chambers, K.C. (instructed by Mr. John Gillespie, solicitor), appeared on behalf of Mr. Brydon, and Mr. J. C. R. Lardner, solicitor, appeared on behalf of Nurse Bridget Holland. . . . The matter was first brought under notice by the Roman Catholic Chaplain, who stated, confidentially, on the 17th January, to the Resident Medical Superintendent and the Head Nurse, that he had been informed that on a day in December the engineer and patient, Sarah Beatty, had been together in a dormitory of No. 4 Division under circumstances indicating that immoral conduct had taken place between them. The reverend gentleman made it perfectly clear that he expressed no opinion whatever as to the truth or otherwise of the allegation, but stated that he considered it his duty to inform the Resident Medical Superintendent of the matter with the view of having it investigated. The Resident Medical Superintendent, therefore, interrogated the nurses of the division where the patient was located, but could not obtain any evidence in support of the charge, or any information which he considered sufficient to justify him in reporting the matter to the committee or to the inspectors. No further action was taken in the matter, perhaps partly in consequence of Dr. Taylor being incapacitated from duty through illness. On the 27th January he made further inquiries, as the result of which he felt it incumbent on him to consult two members of the committee who reside near the asylum, with the view of deciding whether any steps should be taken. At this stage the matter was brought under the notice of the inspectors by a communication received on the 28th January, and signed "J. Clarke, Glasslough Street, Monaghan." Two letters from the inspectors thus addressed were, however, returned through the post marked, "not known; opened by J. Clarke; not for me." In consequence of the Resident Medical Superintendent's report on the allegations contained in the letter signed "J. Clarke," the inspectors felt it their duty to hold an inquiry on oath regarding the matter. At the inquiry the only direct evidence tendered in support of the charge was that of Nurse Holland, and this evidence is, in the opinion of the inspectors, altogether unworthy of credence.

"The report having reviewed the evidence, stated that Nurse Holland admitted in cross-examination by Mr. Chambers that her previous statements to the Resident Medical Superintendent were lies, and that she would not hesitate to make false statements to her superior officers when not on oath. Mr. Brydon, who is over sixty years of age, has been almost thirty-six years in the institution, and he has always borne an excellent character, denied that there was any foundation whatever for the charge.

"The report went on to state that:—It is a significant fact that the date first mentioned as that on which the occurrence took place, viz., the 4th December, was a Sunday, a day on which Mr. Brydon was not in the wards at all after 10 o'clock a.m. If, as Nurse Holland swore, no notice was taken of the matter by the charge nurse, it seems extraordinary that Holland did not at the time carry her complaint to the chaplain or one of the superior officers, as she was bound to