

Massara, entered St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Convent at Coventry, and became successively a postulant and a novice, but did not actually take the vows and become a nun. At the end of the two and a half years she resolved to leave the nunnery and return to the world, and preparations were made accordingly. She discarded her religious garments and assumed others, and was escorted into the train for Euston, her intention being to live with friends at Sutton, in Surrey. She actually arrived at Sutton Station, having been unaccompanied since she left Coventry, and was found by the stationmaster at Sutton, wandering aimlessly about the platform. The friends at Sutton do not appear to have expected her, and when she arrived she cried "Oh, Mrs. Lowe, take me in, take me in," and then almost fainted. Her manner was very peculiar, and when Mr. Lowe saw her, he said at once, "Oh, she's off her head." Next day she was certified and taken to Brookwood Asylum, where in time she became convalescent. An order was then made by the Surrey Justices for her removal to Coventry, and against this order the Guardians of Coventry appealed. It appears that if the girl was insane when she left Coventry, she would have been properly chargeable to Coventry, but if she was then sane, she would have her settlement in Epsom. She was unquestionably insane when she arrived at Sutton, and Dr. Barton, of Brookwood, testified that, in his opinion, she had been insane for "some time" before entering the asylum, and that her insanity while at Coventry had been overlooked. On the other hand a number of nuns, who had been in daily contact with Massara, proved that she was a bright intelligent girl, and had shown no signs of insanity while in the convent. Upon this evidence the court (Surrey Quarter Sessions) found that Massara was capable of forming the intention of leaving Coventry at the time she did so, and allowed the appeal.—*Daily Graphic*, January 7th.

The case is probably unique. It certainly seems that if the girl could find her way unassisted from Euston to Sutton, she must have had her wits about her sufficiently to form the intention of leaving Coventry, which was the fact that decided the case.

"CORK AUXILIARY ASYLUM.

"Mr. Sloan asked the Chief Secretary if he was aware that Dr. Kelly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Cloyne, had been permitted by the Lord Lieutenant, and contrary to the advice and remonstrance of the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums, to detach 350 lunatics from the County Asylum in Cork and lodge them in an unused industrial school at Youghal, which he had prepared for this purpose; that the Bishop received a capitation grant for each patient, that there was no resident doctor to take charge of these patients, nor any qualified nurse in charge of them, that the house, built and arranged for a doctor, has been handed over to the chaplain, and that the Resident Medical Superintendent of the Cork Asylum had been refused permission to visit the auxiliary asylum; and, if so, would he say what steps, if any, did he intend taking in the matter.

"Mr. Wyndham said that in 1901 the Lord Lieutenant, under Section 9 (4) of the Local Government Act of 1898, signified his approval of the plans for the conversion of an industrial school building at Youghal into an auxiliary asylum, established for about 400 patients, under the 76th Section of that Act. The plans which were submitted in 1900 by the Cork District Asylum Committee, of which Dr. Kelly, Lord Bishop of Ross, was a member, were recommended for His Excellency's approval by the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums. A capitation grant of 2s. per week was payable for each patient in the auxiliary asylum under Sections 58 and 76 of the Act. There was no resident doctor as the committee decided to appoint a visiting medical officer instead, but the consent of the Lord Lieutenant to the appointment of a visiting medical officer has only been given as a tentative measure which would be open to reconsideration in the event of the arrangement being found defective. The institution had been placed in charge of a community of nuns, who were assisted by the ordinary asylum attendants. It was understood

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."

"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.