

*per cent.* of them are Catholics—at least 96 *per cent.* That being so, and when we have a candidate of equal merit and distinction before us as a body composed of Roman Catholics, which is the religion also of the patients, to have a man of the same faith and feelings as those he is in charge of, it is our right and privilege, and we should be equal to take advantage of it. If we did not do it we would be less than men. The time is come when the people should put forward men of their own religious beliefs. I don't do that through any religious or rancorous feelings; I do it on the ground it is time for us to have the opportunity of putting men of our own religious belief in the governing ranks of the institutions of the country."

This gentleman was followed by Mr. Galvin, who appears to be chairman of the Roscommon county council, who proposed the senior A.M.O. "in the interests of that spirit of fair play which gives to a man the reward of merit." In his vigorous remarks Mr. Galvin denied that the religious aspect of the question should be considered, and said the public service would suffer unless "the ordinary reward of merit is in front" of hard-working and able officials. He was supported by Mr. P. J. Kelly, who seconded his motion, remarking, "I think it my duty to stand up and say—as one burning with a fierce Catholicity—that I don't think that Catholicity or religion should be dragged into this election. . . . Let it not be said to-morrow or next day that we are unworthy of home rule, for we are too bigotted. . . . I have gone through the fire much more than your Lordship or your Grace for Catholicity, and I say that the senior A.M.O. should be returned." Another member following on the same side wanted a cause for anyone being "pitchforked in over the senior doctor's head. It is without justice or fair play as it is." Hereon Mr. Byrne observed "I did not propose the junior A.M.O. on sectarian grounds. I proposed him because 97 *per cent.* of the patients were Roman Catholics." The election having taken place and the junior A.M.O. being chosen by seventeen votes to five, Dr. Healey, Archbishop of Tuam, said that when you have two men eminently and equally clever the committee should be free to give their vote to the man of their own choice. He also reminded the committee that on the occasion when the senior A.M.O. was appointed Dr. Healey had urged them to select a Roman Catholic, but had been defeated by a casting vote. He spoke highly of the candidate who had now been rejected, and said he would support a proposal for a substantial increase to his salary.

It is the law in Ireland that the appointment of a medical superintendent requires the confirmation of the Lord Lieutenant. When the appointment at Ballinasloe was in due course notified to the Lord Lieutenant for this purpose the Irish Government made a remarkable display of their usual qualities. They at once requested the committee to state "the reason for passing over the senior assistant medical officer of the asylum, who was also acting medical superintendent" in their "nomination" of medical superintendent. The committee replied that they did not "nominate," but "appoint," and added, "we deny the right of any man demanding a reason—whether individually or collectively—for our voting for or against any particular candidate." Thereupon the Lord Lieutenant confirmed the appointment.

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#### THE PRICE OF A NOSE.

We are glad to be able to say that one other journal besides our own, and before we had an opportunity of so doing, has commented upon the case of cruelty at Ballinasloe. Though many papers have enlarged upon such other aspects of Ballinasloe management which could give rise to a polemic discussion, ill-usage of patients would appear to be a thing so consistent with the *raison d'être* of lunatic asylums as to be scarcely worth notice. We must credit our Nationalist contemporary, the *Western News*, however, with taking an interest in this matter. That paper writes as follows, commenting on the action of a member of the committee who was anxious to exonerate the offender:

"Father Begley's feelings are of a highly-strung mixed order. He expressed

unbounded sympathy with the 'poor country boy' who was fined £5 for striking a raving, pinioned lunatic a blow that would fell an ox, and which scattered the poor wretch's blood about the floor, as if a bull were bled on it.

"The 'poor country boy' striking a roped-up lunatic and smashing his nose is truly an object for refined sympathy! A 'poor boy' six foot eight inches in height, within a few paces of other attendants and a whistle in his pocket, smashing down on the face of a man whose arms were pinioned. We say that the 'poor boy' ought to have been tried by a jury and got penal servitude, but then religion so refines human feeling!

"If ratepayers, whose friends may be afflicted and seek protection at this institution, find that wanton brutality is condoned by religion, we should like to know with what feelings of security they consign their friends to lunatic shambles, if they are to earn that name. We should like to know what they pay rates for? Isn't the 'poor boy' paid for his 'risks,' just as a soldier or policeman is paid, and is he to murder a man if he suspects danger of any sort?

"We think Father Begley ought to ease the mind of this county on this point. He is elected to protect the poor and afflicted and helpless. He is entitled to give assurance that they shall be protected for the money paid. He is not entitled to shake public confidence in this great institution by one breath of sympathy with wanton, cowardly blackguardism.

"The one thing we see in the case is that the magistrates utterly failed to do their duty in inflicting a fine."

The language of this extract is possibly stronger than we are accustomed to, and it certainly loses force by being so personal, but we are inclined to agree with the last sentence. It must be remembered, however, that in another asylum in the West of Ireland some time ago the Committee decided to retain the services of an attendant who had got two or three months in gaol for a savage assault upon a patient.

#### BALLINASLOE ONCE MORE: COMIC RELIEF.

The Irish are a singular people. There was a time when their gaiety was supposed to be irrepressible, but Thackeray discovered that in truth their character is fundamentally melancholy and their joviality a mere blind. It was a pleasant quality, and he who has to deal with Irishmen now may regret that it appears to have been almost burned out by the fires of controversy, political and other. Appropriately enough the little fun that is yet remaining in the land seems to find refuge in asylums. That agreeable facility for raising a laugh, even at his own expense, which characterised the Irishman of Sam Lover and Charles Lever, is hardly to be found anywhere else. We had occasion not long ago to comment on the uncrowned buttons of the Cork Asylum. Ballinasloe Asylum, though handicapped by a late start, has won in this race by a whole length, for that institution, we learn from the *Dublin Daily Express* of June 22nd, has not only discharged "the round and top of sovereignty" from its buttons, but has dismissed "On His Majesty's Service" from the outside of most of its envelopes. A few which are designed to cover communications addressed to the Inspectors are still to retain the Royal superscription. There must be some complicated joke here which we fail to appreciate. Why a letter to a patient's friends announcing his death or discharge should be "On the People's Service," while a similar letter to the Inspectors should be "On His Majesty's Service," is only to be understood if we admit with the late Mr. Robert Montgomery that God made the thunder, but the lightning made itself. According to a report furnished by an interviewer to the *Irish Times* of June 23rd these changes were suggested by the new medical superintendent. There is a curious conservatism about retaining on modern envelopes any unmeaning representative of the old system of franking letters. The Committee were also very angry because the Inspectors in writing to them addressed them as "Gentlemen" instead of "Lords and Gentlemen." This shows another inconvenience that arises from following antiquated custom. Surely even in