

*Medical Journal* in a not very up-to-date article. It is good of the ecclesiastics who rule the asylums in the South of Ireland to graciously admit that a man being a doctor does not disqualify him from being the manager of a lunatic asylum. Whether medical qualifications are essential or not for this office is a matter on which existing law and ecclesiastical opinion appear to differ, but that is perhaps of little consequence. The excessive frankness of the southern bishops is certainly advantageous, as it makes clear the line that will be taken all through Ireland in the early future, but tactically we doubt its wisdom. The committees are almost everywhere striving to destroy medical control and discredit medical opinion, and they are playing the game of the church so successfully (though often we believe unconsciously) that she would be wiser (we say it with all reverence) to lie by till she is presently called upon to solve the knots that local self-government is busy tying.

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*The Monaghan Scandal.*

It is our painful duty in Notes and News to record from the files of a local newspaper, dealing with the affairs of the Monaghan Asylum, as disgraceful a story of attempted misuse of power as we have ever had to comment upon. We are familiar with the desire to get rid of medical superintendents in Irish asylums in favour of other methods of management. If nothing else were in view save the happiness of these officers themselves, we could only wish that the prophecy of their would-be supplanters would soon come true, and that there would shortly be no more doctors in Irish asylums. The records of medieval times and even of modern times in some foreign countries tell us, however, what this would mean for the patients, who, after all, though it is often forgotten, are the chief objects for which asylums are built and maintained. But it would not appear that in Monaghan the end desired at present is to get rid of the medical staff in favour of clerical managers, lay or ecclesiastic. The end is more ignoble, being a purely personal one, and the means adopted to attain it are of corresponding baseness. The unfortunate medical superin-

tendent is accused of defective sight, and after a long series of petty persecutions, an attempt is made to force upon him a compulsory ophthalmoscopic examination, with a view to worrying him out of his office. It is true this barbarous motion was defeated by the smallest possible majority. It is also true, and it is probably far more to the purpose, that the Catholic Bishop of the diocese, who is a member of the committee, spoke like a gentleman and a Christian in favour of an old and excellent public servant, and did not hesitate to denounce the libellous nature of the charges made.

Those who publicly take such action in an asylum committee, knowing that their remarks will appear in all the local papers, can have little knowledge or care of what harm they do to the discipline of the institution, or (consequently) to the welfare of those whom they are bound to protect. But humanity is a small consideration when weighed against the vulgar insolence of the committee-man feeling his power—

“Dressed in a little brief authority.”

The officer attacked on this occasion has been, as we understand, in his present office for more than eighteen years, and has spent a lifetime in the specialty. Scotch committees sometimes (rarely) heckle their medical officers; English committees are not rarely a trifle vulgar and even occasionally offensive; but nowhere, except among the warm-hearted Irish, would such barbarism to an old and trusty officer be possible. Kindness to the ailing and worn-out (we are, by the way, happy to say that our Monaghan brother is neither one nor the other) is certainly universal on this side the Channel. How many English superintendents will remember the genial warning from their Committee not to work too hard nor to keep too close to their exacting task; and how many even the kindly insistence on an occasional holiday when their anxious and onerous duties have made them seem a little fagged. How different is the feeling in Ireland!

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*The Retirement of Dr. White.*

The retirement of Dr. Ernest White, the ex-President of the Medico-Psychological Association, from the post of super-