

The existing Medico-Psychological Association examination would, no doubt, as it was intended, be sufficient to qualify students or medical men for such work ; but for the more highly specialised posts of superintending institutions for the insane a higher qualification should be necessary, comparable to the Diploma of Public Health.

The Commissioners now insist on a certain amount of experience in persons undertaking the superintendency of private asylums, but they cannot prevent the committees of county or borough asylums from occasionally appointing persons who have had no previous special experience in mental disease ; a higher special examination would make the latter abuse very much more difficult, and render the task of the Commissioners lighter.

To make special examinations a success, therefore, the Association, as a body, should press the need of reform in these matters on the Legislature, enlighten the public in regard to them, and enlist the sympathy of the general profession ; unless some definite advantage or expectation of advantage can be held out to candidates, it is to be feared that the number of these will not largely increase.

The Sligo Cruelty Case.

Those who have had much to do with the rapidly increasing and rising class of politicians, may be disposed to echo with a slight alteration the words of the Latin poet, which Tom Ingoldsby was so fond of, "*politicum si dixeris omnia dixisti* ;" but we are at present inclined to look at things in another way, and to entertain a real regard for the Irish politician. For a long time we could not understand why many of the most prominent of the Irish political leaders have expressed a strong desire to make the care of the insane in Ireland a national charge, and to place their management entirely in the hands of the Government. We did not see why a scheme should find favour so much at variance with modern democratic notions of Local Government. We believe we understand it now, that is, if anybody can understand anything Irish.

In the *Irish Times* newspaper of May 14th, 1901, we find the following announcement :

CRUELTY TO A LUNATIC. A KEEPER SENT TO JAIL.

Yesterday, at Sligo Borough Petty Sessions Court, before the Mayor, Mr. E. Foley (presiding), and a large bench of magistrates, a man named Thomas Gaffney, an attendant in the Sligo Lunatic Asylum, was charged by the Crown, at the instance of District Inspector Carden, R.I.C., with having brutally assaulted a lunatic patient, named P. Lenehan. Mr. W. R. Fenton, Crown Solicitor, prosecuted, and Mr. R. Tighe defended. An application on behalf of the defendant for an adjournment for three months was made, Mr. Tighe stating that the governors of the asylum had placed the keeper Gaffney on probation for that period, as a punishment for the assault. The magistrates decided to hear the case. Mr. Fenton said that the patient who had been so brutally assaulted was a most inoffensive man, the form of mania which affected him being restlessness and depression. It appeared that because the patient did not sit down immediately, on being ordered to do so by Gaffney, the latter beat and kicked the unfortunate patient in a cruel manner. The assault took place on the 2nd April, and the Inspectors of Lunacy held a sworn investigation on the 4th April. The result of the investigation was that the inspectors recommended the Board of Governors to dismiss the attendant; but the Governors refused to do so, and cautioned him instead, and put him on probation to be of good behaviour for three months. Evidence was then given by the man who was beaten, and another attendant also deposed to the fact that Gaffney had kicked the patient. Dr. Gilcrist, the assistant medical officer of the asylum, and Dr. E. C. M'Dowel, the visiting physician, gave evidence as to the injuries inflicted on Lenehan. The defence was that there was a struggle, and that both the attendant and the patient fell, the latter injuring himself by falling against a chair. It was admitted that Gaffney struck the patient with his hand because the latter did not sit down when told to do so. The majority of the magistrates decided to send Gaffney to jail for two months, the maximum penalty.

It is hardly necessary to comment on this delightful story, and we feel that we could not do justice to it. One pleasant feature is apparent, and one pleasant inference is to be drawn. The first is that the Inspectors in the performance of their duty have for once succeeded in securing the co-operation of the Government. The inference is that the Irish Members, who distrust local control of lunatics, are right after all and know their country. They too are to be congratulated on their courage—but *quo usque, Domine?*