

Bedford and for the Victoria Home for Nurses at Bournemouth; and a Night Superintendent for the Monsall Fever Hospital at Manchester.

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In our nineteenth number, I reprinted from the *Morning Post* a letter from Sir Maurice Fitzgerald upon the treatment accorded to the Matron at the Hospital on Valencia Island. It is only fair, therefore, to reprint the following reply, which has appeared in the columns of our contemporary. All the same, I hold to the opinion I expressed, that Nurses are not given to proselytising, that Nursing is not a question of creed or dogma, and that it is most sad to think that in distressful Ireland it should be made to appear so. Finally, I would most strongly maintain that Hospitals are primarily and chiefly intended for bodily cure, not for "spiritual needs," and, therefore, that religious doctrines, vastly important as they are, must not be considered before the bodily welfare of the patients:—

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"RELIGIOUS Intolerance in Ireland.—To the Editor of the *Morning Post*.—Sir,—Some kind friend has sent me a copy of your paper, containing a letter over the signature of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry. Were it not for the courtesy of this gentleman, who evidently has higher ideas of fair play than the writer, the matter would, in all probability, never have come under my notice. Why did not the Knight of Kerry write to some Irish paper which I am in the habit of seeing, or at least send me the *Morning Post* which contained his letter? The question naturally suggests itself, was it merely 'dished up for consumption by a too gullible British public?' Honest and impartial Englishmen will be amazed when they learn the true state of the case.

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"WE have on the Island of Valencia a village Hospital, supported by private contributions, and controlled by a local committee of some fourteen members. Of these members, only two were Catholics, of whom I was one. Such was the composition of the committee, although the Hospital was intended for the poor of Valencia, who, with scarcely an exception, are all Catholics. This fact speaks for itself. The late Matron, a native and a Catholic, being about to emigrate, a meeting was called to consider her resignation. It was only on the morning of the day of our meeting that I got official intimation that the Matron's resignation would be handed in, and I had no notion whatever that a successor would be appointed that day. When I arrived, I was amazed to find the name of Sister F., of a Protestant Nursing community, suddenly sprung on the

meeting. The Protestant members had evidently arranged the whole thing beforehand, without consulting either my Catholic fellow-member or myself.

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"I PROTESTED strongly and earnestly against the appointment, as I considered that the Hospital, being intended for the poor of Valencia, who are almost exclusively Catholic, ought to have a Catholic Nurse, for the following reasons:—First, the Protestant Nurse, if so minded, would have it in her power to convert the Hospital into a proselytising institution. I don't say whether she would or not, but I could not consider myself justified in running the risk of having an experiment made on my poor people. Second, in any institution of the kind, the spiritual needs of the patients should be attended to, as well as their bodily wants. Hence the Nurse should be one who could enter into their religious feelings, and respond to them, pray with them, and help them to die as Catholics should die. Third, on the grounds of fair-play. I stated at the meeting that I would rather cut off my right hand than be a party to forcing a body of Protestant patients to accept a Catholic Nurse. I then asked, as no previous notice had been given, to adjourn the appointment for a week or two, and that I would undertake to procure a Catholic Nurse, as highly certificated and as suitable from every point of view. My protest was unheeded, and I was overborne by the Protestant majority.

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"SEEING the intolerant bigotry of their action, where no Protestant interest was concerned, I then and there severed my connection with the committee, and warned them that I would feel bound, in the discharge of my pastoral duty, to dissuade my people from entering the Hospital. I have done so, and have succeeded; and for this two attempts have been made by this bigoted coterie to have me arrested and prosecuted under the Coercion Act, which, odious as it is, was surely never intended for religious persecution. These attempts were foiled, but the story is instructive, as showing how Sir Maurice Fitzgerald would manufacture criminals in Kerry. The Knight of Kerry, as autocrat of Valencia, was so long accustomed to work his own sweet will, that a humiliating sense of defeat easily leads him now into making false and foolish statements. 'The parish priest,' he says, 'publicly stated that he would refuse them the last Sacrament of the Church, and curse them from the altar.' Sir Maurice Fitzgerald must have been grossly misinformed, or have given too easy credit to idle rumour. This charge of having used impious threats and imprecations springs from the hostile

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