

## Annotations.

### THE POWERS OF THE IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

A meeting of the Judicial Committee of the Irish Privy Council was held on Tuesday and Wednesday in last week in the Council Chamber, Dublin Castle. The Lord Chancellor presided. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the petition of Boards of Guardians throughout the country requesting the Lord Lieutenant in Council to withdraw his approval of the sealed order of the Local Government Board of February 4th, 1901. Provisions of this Order, which affect nurses, are that :—

(1) The Board of Guardians shall, upon the occurrence of any vacancy, appoint, subject to the approval of the Local Government Board, fit persons to perform the duties of the officers enumerated (the sixth officer specified is "Nurse of the Workhouse.")

(2) The Board of Guardians shall appoint, subject to the approval of the Local Government Board in each case, such and so many qualified assistants as the Local Government Board shall from time to time think necessary for the efficient performance of the duties of the said several officers, and such and so many paid attendants in the workhouse infirmaries and hospitals as the Local Government Board shall from time to time think necessary.

(3) Every officer appointed to or holding any office under the principal Order, as amended by the amending Order, and this Order shall, subject to the provisions of Article 40 of the principal Order and Article 4 of this Order, continue to hold the same until he die, or resign, or be removed by the Local Government Board; and every assistant and paid attendant may be dismissed by the Board of Guardians, subject to the consent of the Local Government Board; and every such death or resignation shall be reported to the Local Government Board.

The evidence given in the course of the enquiry was so important as bearing upon the condition of nursing in Irish workhouses, and the inadequate provision for the sick made by most Boards of Guardians, that we propose to refer to it at greater length in a future issue. We may here point out however that no evidence was taken from a trained Superintendent of Nursing, or from a trained nurse at all, a fact which cannot be too deeply regretted as it could not fail to have been most helpful to the Judicial Committee. The decision of this Committee was as follows :—

The Committee must advise His Excellency to disallow the Order as it stands, but they report that evidence has been given establishing to their satisfaction the necessity for some rule or order which will make better provision for efficient nursing, but no evidence has been given which appears to justify a general revocation of Articles 24 and 39 of the Order of 1882.

### THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE.

We observe with great pleasure that at the recent anniversary festival of the Royal Hospital for Incurables, Putney, Lord Tweedmouth, who presided, said that on visiting the hospital he found that of the 217 inmates only 36 were males, and though not an advocate of "women's rights," he thought the time had come for ladies to be elected to the Board of Management. This opinion was endorsed by the Marquis of Northampton, the President of the Hospital, so we may suppose that this long delayed, much opposed, but necessary reform will soon be made. When it is accomplished we hope that Miss Georgiana Hill's persistent advocacy of the measure will receive due recognition.

### THE FIRE AT A WORKHOUSE INFIRMARY.

The lamentable fire at the Stafford Workhouse Infirmary, which resulted in the death of seven persons, raises several points of interest.

In the first place, it appears from the Press reports of the occurrence that, in the old infirmary portion of the workhouse in which the fire originated, there was no one up during the night to attend to the wants of the aged and imbecile persons housed in this wing, or to look after the safety of the building. A nurse (Nurse Langaheen) was sleeping on the premises, and when aroused by one of the imbecile women, acted with the utmost promptitude, and undoubtedly prevented greater loss of life. But it is not right either that imbeciles and aged persons should be left in a public institution without a trained nurse on duty during the night, or that a nurse should be subjected to the strain of responsibility for these cases night and day. In the next place, how did it happen that the cook had a fire in her bed-room at the end of May, when many rate-payers cannot afford this luxury even in the depths of winter? Again, how came it that at nearly two o'clock in the morning the cook was up and dressed? All these points appear to us to be subjects for legitimate inquiry.

Nurse Langaheen, when awakened, immediately warned the imbeciles of their danger, and removed three women and their babies from the lying-in ward. She then adjusted the fire hose, and played on the burning part of the building until relieved by the matron and a laundress, when in almost an exhausted condition, thus preventing the fire from spreading to the main part of the building, where over 260 inmates were housed.

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