JOHN MOLONY, F.R.C.P.I.

Dr. MOLONY was a well-known and deservedly popular member of the Irish division of our Association, of which he was a member for many years.

For about ten years after he qualified he was engaged in general practice, and in the year 1884 he was appointed Resident Medical Superintendent to St. Patrick's Hospital, the famous foundation of Dean Swift, commonly known by his name "Swift's Hospital." He found that institution in a very backward and deplorable condition. In Sir Henry Burdett's *Hospitals and Asylums of the World*, published in 1891, the following passage occurs: "The institution was one of the last strongholds of the worst forms of restraint. This has been done away with by the present enlightened Medical Superintendent, who, on taking charge of the institution, some six years ago, appears to have done what Pinel did in France and William Tuke in England a hundred years before. Till the appointment of the present head of the asylum, incredible as it may appear, pierced chairs, in which the patients were strapped all day, were in every-day use for a considerable proportion of the patients." The use of delf instead of tin feeding utensils for the patients (all middle-class people) is understood to have been part of Dr. Molony's early work. From these examples it may be judged how difficult was his task. How well it was accomplished is known to all who are familiar with the changed condition of the hospital before he left it. The work of his official life, however, after he had overcome his earlier difficulties, was to persuade the authorities of his hospital to procure an estate in the country and to supplement the accommodation provided in the melancholy old structure in Dublin by a suitable modern asylum. This he accomplished after years of persevering endeavour in 1895. Dr. Molony was transferred to the charge of the new auxiliary shortly after it was opened. He resigned office in 1902 after a total service of eighteen years, receiving a small pension. He then went to live at Forkhill, near Dundalk, where he kept borderland cases.

His health of late years was frail. He suffered from dilated and fatty heart. He had a severe attack of influenza in the early spring, and his recovery was retarded by the occurrence of phlebitis in one of his legs. He died quite suddenly on the morning of April 7th, probably from a detached thrombus, at the age of fifty-five.

Dr. Molony belonged to an old and well-known family of the County Clare. He was twice married, first to Miss Lyons-Montgomery, by whom he had two sons, and secondly to Miss Higginson, who, with his sons, survives him. To this accomplished lady, sister of a well-known Irish authoress, the respectful sympathy of her husband's old friends and colleagues is due.

Dr. Molony did not write much, but an occasional article in the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy of Medicine* showed his interest in one aspect of his work, while his Reports to his Committee contained many valuable suggestions, indicating that he had thoroughly grasped the requirements of a modern hospital for the insane. In one of these, describing various English and Scotch chartered hospitals, and published in 1891, he made a sagacious proposal, which we venture to think his Committee did ill not to give heed to. The local public asylum at that time was greatly overcrowded, and there were difficulties about building additions. Dr. Molony suggested that arrangements should be made whereby "Swifts" should take over the excess patients. This was not attended to, and the opportunity passed away. But Dr. Molony, in spite of eminent merits, had not the knack of persuading a committee, and everything which he did and many things which he tried and failed to accomplish caused him those disproportionate pains which fall to the lot of the conscientious and sensitive man who is not quite fitted for wrestling with Boards and committees—a trying and usually thankless task. He was among the most amiable of men. His kindness to his patients was extreme, and was rewarded by their unstinted affection, which he held very dear. He was endeared to his friends as a kindly, straightforward gentleman, and all who knew him regret his comparatively early death.

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