

CORK LUNATIC ASYLUM PLANS.

AT the last meeting of the board of governors, the dispute in reference to the plans was resumed. We are glad to see such evidence of fair play as was given expression to in the disinterested remarks of Sir Denham Norreys, which we here subjoin, along with the correspondence read by Dr. Eames :—

My statement is that he was employed as architect for the completion of certain works—I will not say as the architect of the board, for he was not. I think that as he was not so appointed as architect, no board could, without notice to the rest of the governors, have dismissed Mr. Atkins—that was a proceeding *ultra vires*. Therefore I contend that the whole of these proceedings were not in accordance with the rules of the institution, and I contend that Mr. Atkins has done nothing whatever which deserves the treatment that he has received. All these alterations that have been so frequently spoken of were for the benefit of the board, done with the consent of the board, or the committee, or Dr. Eames, or Mr. Edwards. I think you have treated Mr. Atkins with great injustice. You have taken the business out of his hands on the most insufficient grounds. There happens to be a misconception between Dr. Eames and Mr. Atkins as to whether alterations were made with the consent of Dr. Eames. Where Mr. Atkins makes a positive assertion, and Dr. Eames makes another contrary statement, we may safely assume from their position that there has been a mistake, for I would not believe that either of them would intentionally state what is false. I therefore think that these proceedings have been rather hard, and it seems to me it would have been much better that you should have allowed the gentleman who designed these plans to superintend the carrying out of them. I think it would be much safer for the board and fairer toward Mr. Atkins to allow him to have the completion of the works.

SIR,—I am instructed by the house committee of the Cork District Lunatic Asylum to intimate to you, in reply to yours of the 14th inst., that however disposed they are to put an end to the discussions and correspondence concerning your claim, they cannot entertain your offer. I am to state that the committee did not come to the resolve communicated to you without having first taken most competent and independent counsel, with persons wholly disconnected with the asylum, and regarding the investigation already had, and believing the decision arrived at was considerate and liberal, they do not now see why they should reconsider the matter. I am also directed to inform you that the committee altogether deny the assumed legality of your claim of 5 per cent., and that they cannot enter into the proposed discussion with you on the basis of the eight propositions put forward in your letter. I am at the same time directed to remind you of the facts that your own estimate of the proposed work was under £11,000, and they have tendered you a commission on £12,000.

JAMES ALEX. EAMES, M.D.,

June 29th.

Res. Med. Supt.

The reply to this letter—which was, however, directed to the general board—was as follows :

My LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—The house committee having declined to accede to a proposal made by me with a view to an amicable arrangement being come to as regards the difference between the governors and myself, and as I am still anxious to bring the matter to a conclusion in a friendly spirit, I now beg to bring my proposal before the board itself. I have done a large number of works at the asylum, for all of which I have orders from the governors. My fees for these were withheld, solely on the grounds of my being employed on the proposed new works, and from a miscellaneous account alone £74 was deducted. The details of the other works, for which I have not been paid, are given in my letter to the committee. My proposition was to discuss the matter, provided the items alluded to were duly taken into consideration; or, should the governors prefer, I have no objection to leave the entire question to the decision of some architect of position in Dublin to be mutually agreed upon, as I am anxious that the part I have taken in the whole transaction should be thoroughly investigated. Up to the present my professional character has been assailed without proper investigation having taken place.

July 1st, 1875.

WM. ATKINS.

The consideration of the foregoing letter was by resolution referred to the committee. Mr. Atkins, subsequent to the meeting and in reference to certain impressions prevailing as to his position and appointment as architect, has written the following letter:

SIR,—In reference to the proceedings of the board of governors, as reported, it is necessary that I should correct an impression which seems to prevail with some of the members, namely, that was only appointed to prepare the plans for the new buildings. I was engaged on these works as I have always been, to see them carried out to completion. That this was the intention of the governors appears from the proceedings of the board on the 4th of December last, when a resolution was passed associating the house committee with me, to decide any difference that might arise with the contractor during the progress of the works. Dr. Eames mentioned that he did not allude to the "professional" question in the matter; he should not forget that he stated that my letter of explanation, which included the professional question, "was all incorrect." In mentioning the "facts," he did not say that the alterations were proposed by him, and that I finished them on the original plans, after his interview with me, to save a board day. The committee say that they desired me not to alter the existing plans. I still affirm that I have not the slightest recollection of this. But supposing that they did so, they have also written to me to say that they gave no authority for making new drawings. What, then, was I to make ready for the board, if I were not to alter the existing drawings, or make new ones? The chairman mentioned that I did not reply to the *final* letter of the committee. This was an answer to one from me, in which I made a proposition for an amicable settlement of the matter, and I did not think that a reply was necessary.

July 5th, 1875.

WM. ATKINS.

The duty of the board of governors appears to us to be very simple, if they are anxious to see justice done. The proposition of the architect, as made in his letter of the 1st of July, we consider a very fair one; and, as remarked by Sir Denham Norreys at the board meeting, there appears to be rather too much playing upon the word whether Mr. Atkins was really architect of the asylum or of the works. It is quite clear that he was appointed and employed, and he is fairly entitled to the claim he has put forward, in his own interest and in that of the profession of which he is no unworthy member.

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