

terests of the insane, and of their entire communities ; and I may safely include in this category some others—as those of Boston, Rhode Island, and Hartford, whose superintendents retired after long periods of service, carrying with them the strong regrets of their governors and of the public at large. I accept it as an indisputable fact that the incumbents who have thus so long held their positions have well merited the permanence of their tenure of office ; but if this be so, why should not the rule be universal ? Surely the Eastern and Middle States enjoy not any monopoly of good men. That the rule is not universal some who now hear me, and far too many of those who once heard me, could but too amply and painfully testify. At the close of the last meeting of this association, attended by me, at Madison, I had the painful intimation of the dismissal from office of a very energetic and, as far as I knew or have since learned, a very efficient superintendent, in his absence at that meeting. Such a procedure was surely more worthy of the autocrat of all the Russias than of the governing body of an American State Asylum ; and yet, I fear, it was no isolated instance of the capricious and cowardly official murder of a deserving public servant.

In Canada, fortunately for public officers, and, as I believe, for the public service, every Government appointment, and the majority of important corporate appointments, are understood and expected to be as durable as the good behaviour of the incumbents, which virtually is equivalent to life-long. I have even heard it said that it requires very strong pressure to effect the dismissal of an inefficient officer. It is also a well understood maxim in our departments that it is the moral duty of the chiefs to defend all their servants, and to see that they shall not suffer from unjust accusations. This system works well, and our men generally work well under it. The man who enters the public service under the expectation of this tenure has the very strongest inducement to acquit himself of all his duties zealously, fearlessly, and honourably ; but he who knows not the day he may be turned adrift, and cast, perhaps, poor and broken-hearted on the world, has only meagre encouragement to be either active or honest. Nor can I think that the mitigation of this evil, under the system obtaining in some States, of periodic renewals of lease of office, by repetition of election

every five or other number of years, is any very substantial improvement, for it is with you an unfortunate contingency that not only is it expected that every man shall exercise his electoral suffrage, but whoever fails to do so is regarded as a Philistine, and he must suffer decapitation accordingly. If, however, it be true, as I have heard often reported by your own people, that asylum superintendents, in common with other public officers, owe their appointments most largely to political influence and party energy, we need not be surprised when we see them floated out of office on the same wave on which they swam into it.

It would be presumptuous in me to commend for your adoption anything having no higher prestige than mere British or Canadian usage or merit ; yet I do believe you would be large gainers by a quiet retracement of your steps in the matter of important appointments to office, the good and satisfactory working of which depends in so large a measure on matured experience ; nor would I have you stop here, but I would go yet further and recommend the expediency, as well as the justice, of awarding to superintendents and other faithful officers a competent retiring annual allowance, graduated on their length of service. This is the rule in British and other transatlantic asylums. It has become the rule, though in a more limited degree, in this province, so that every officer or employè is granted a retiring allowance, in a lump sum, which is determined by the length of his or her service. The obvious object and tendency of this system is to induce every one engaged in the service, from the chief down to the scullion, to continue long, and behave well in their respective spheres. I regard it as equally just and politic. I must not forget here to add, that although public servants in Canada are not prohibited from exercising their electoral franchise, yet it is recommended to them by their superiors to abstain from so doing, and I have always regarded this exemption from party exposure as a valuable civil boon. I would close my observations on this part of my subject with the following quotations from a recent number of an able popular American journal, and allow me to say that I would not myself presume to speak of the Civil Service of the United States in similar severe terms :—

“There is no doubt whatever,” says this writer,