

during the time soon following her wedding. Thus, she did not remember, so she said, making an attempt to strangle herself. The judge, Sir J. Hannen, summed up clearly and fairly, and pointed out that the woman did not appear capable of understanding actions free from the influence of delusions, and was therefore incapable of entering into a contract like that of marriage, and he decreed the marriage *null*. This is the first case of the kind which has been decided, and is not by any means a solitary one, so far as the insanity and marriage are concerned. During the past year several cases have, we believe, been in Bethlem in which marriage was not consummated in consequence of insanity. In one a man heard a voice telling him he must not touch his wife, and the same patient later heard a voice telling him not to eat. The case decided is a first one, and is incomplete. What line would have been followed if the marriage had been consummated, and, still more, if a child had been begotten? The inability to contract would have been the same, but we fear there might have been greater difficulty to persuade a jury if a jury had been deciding—that a divorce was justifiable. In murder cases the feeling of many is moved against taking human life, but the lifelong misery caused by an unjust marriage in which one of the contracting parties was insane, is a suffering of the innocent which is unhappily overlooked. Such cases make it all important that something should be done, and every step such as the one reached in the above decision carefully watched.—*The Lancet*, Dec. 31, 1881.

THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT BILL.

In consequence of the reference in the Queen's Speech to a forthcoming County Government Bill, the attention of the Medical Superintendents of Asylums has been directed to the question of its probable bearing on the government of asylums, and other matters. A meeting was held on the 21st of February in London, when considerable interchange of opinion took place. Although, as the Bill was not printed, the materials on which to form an opinion as to the necessity for action were not before the meeting, the general question was discussed. It was concluded to request the Parliamentary Committee of the Association to take the Bill into consideration when its provisions are known. This they will doubtless do.

Obituary.

ALEXANDRE-JACQUES-FRANÇOIS BRIERRE DE BOISMONT.

Full of years, the well-known and distinguished Brierre de Boismont, an Honorary Member of our Association, has passed away. He died December 25th, 1881, at St. Mandé, near Paris, at the advanced age of eighty-five. While he lived he formed a link between the era of Pinel and our own. M. Brierre would be about nine-and-twenty when the great master of the French school of Mental Medicine died. Those who had the good fortune to enjoy his personal acquaintance can bear witness to his kindly disposition, his geniality, his dignity, and the large range of medicine over which his knowledge and interest extended. When the writer visited him nearly four years ago, he displayed his accustomed urbanity, and manifested a certain sadness of manner, especially in reference to his having passed his eightieth year. But it was the loss of Madame Brierre which chiefly depressed him. When she died, who was, as M. Motet says, in the eloquent discourse delivered over his tomb, his other half in all which he undertook, much of his energy forsook him, and he ceased to take an active part in his customary labours.

The writings of M. Brierre are familiar to English alienists, some of them to a wider circle than medical readers. His work on Hallucinations must remain a classic production. If his writings were some of them popular, they were not shallow and they always contained a large amount of reliable information, expressed in well chosen language which never degenerated into writing for writing's sake. His treatises on Suicide, the relations between Civilization and Insanity, his medical and psychological reports and descriptions of what he observed in other countries, and his memoir of Guislain, prove his fertility alike of observation, analysis, and expression; while his medico-legal reports display his ability as an expert, and the conscientious manner in which he fulfilled his duty. Thirty years ago he published a work entitled "De l'interdiction des aliénés et de l'état de la jurisprudence en matière de testaments dans l'imputation de démence, avec des notes de M. Isambert, conseiller à la Cour de cassation." In an obituary notice, signed with the well-known initials, A. M., in the "Annales d'Hygiène publique et de Médecine légale," for February, it is stated that after M. Brierre had retired from public life, and his literary work seemed finished, he, one day in 1875, resumed the pen. "The occasion was rare, the situation delicate. He undertook to review a book which had just appeared, written by his daughter, Mme. Rivet. This analysis was a *chef-d'œuvre*; this work, a *résumé* of daily observations which he had experienced before he wrote them, was valuable from its absence of all scientific pretensions, and by the sincerity of its frequently touching recitals. Brierre de Boismont, impartial, judged the work from a lofty standpoint, and once more he showed those qualities which have made him so distinguished a critic. After this he wrote no more; wounded, besides, in his most tender affections, he lost, almost at once, his accustomed activity. He was entitled to repose after so laborious and useful a life. And we who have known him, who have seen him at work, we address from the bottom of our hearts our sad adieus to the *collaborateur* who has left us." In these adieus, and in affectionate respect for the memory of their regretted Associate, his English friends desire to unite with their French colleagues.

D. H. T.

We add the "Discours" of our estimable *confrère*, M. Motet, in the original, as it would inevitably lose by translation:—

DISCOURS PRONONCÉ PAR LE DOCTEUR MOTET, SUR LA TOMBE DE M. BRIERRE DE BOISMONT LE 27 DÉCEMBRE, 1881.

MESSEURS,

C'est au nom de la Société médico-psychologique de Paris que je prends la parole; je viens exprimer ici les regrets que lui cause la perte de l'un de ses fondateurs, d'un homme dont le dévouement et l'attachement à elle furent sans bornes et qui laisse, dans ses annales, des travaux en si grand nombre que son nom est pour ainsi dire inscrit à chaque page.

Brierre de Boismont avait pour notre société un véritable culte, il avait été l'un des premiers à l'œuvre, le jour où des philosophes et des médecins réalisèrent l'alliance de la psychologie et de la médecine sur un terrain où elles devaient se prêter un mutuel appui.

Il fut tour à tour le secrétaire, le secrétaire général, le président de cette Société qu'il avait vu naître, pour laquelle il se dépensait avec une ardeur sans égale. Et, dans ces fonctions diverses, ce furent toujours la même activité, le même zèle—si bien que, ayant à prendre au milieu de tant de noms illustres, celui qui, dans le passé, personnifierait le mieux notre compagnie, celui de Brierre de Boismont viendrait au premier rang.

J'en trouvais tout dernièrement encore, en Angleterre, le touchant témoignage. On me demandait des nouvelles de M. Brierre de Boismont; ce souvenir de savants étrangers pour l'un des nôtres fit naître en moi un sentiment de