

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.

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#### 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.

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#### 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.