

shrubs and timber. Again, in the asylum itself there are all manner of work-shops, where a large number of the inmates are usefully employed. While no one would sooner acknowledge than Dr. Brushfield himself that to bring about all this, he had been ably assisted by the officers under him, and in a special degree during the last eight years by Dr. Barton, yet his has been the directing mind, and it is with unfeigned regret that we have heard, and that the county will hear, that he considers that the time has now come when he must hand his great work over to others to carry on. Although we are not aware that Dr. Brushfield has formally sent in his resignation, yet we believe we are not betraying confidence when we say that he will probably not be the ruling spirit at another Fancy Ball. This, at all events, we do know, that Dr. Brushfield will not only leave his mark as one of the highest authorities on lunacy matters, but as one possessed of the highest administrative talent, and as having made Brookwood Asylum the model of what such an institution ought to be. He has also made troops of friends, who will, while they will miss him much, entertain many pleasant reminiscences of visits to Brookwood, either to Fancy Balls or other enjoyable entertainments. — *The Surrey Advertiser*, Jan. 14, 1882.

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#### DR. BRUSHFIELD'S RETIREMENT.

Dr. Brushfield resigned his post January 20th. We believe that he will, on leaving, have completed a term of 16 years at the Brookwood Asylum. As he had been previously nearly 14 years at the Cheshire Asylum, he has had 30 years' hard work and anxious responsibility, and has certainly earned a repose which, we trust, he may long enjoy. We remember the time when he attended the clinical lectures, delivered at Hanwell, by Dr. Conolly. He has proved an apt pupil, for, we believe, he has never ordered or sanctioned the employment of restraint in either asylum. But Dr. Brushfield is not a man of one idea, and he has proved himself an admirable superintendent in all ways. Nor is he a mental physician only. His pursuits are far-reaching enough to prevent his being in danger of suffering from ennui in his retirement. Archæology and philology, to which he has already contributed, will, we doubt not, be gainers by his leisure. We would, however, put in a claim ourselves, and hope that the pages of this Journal will, from time to time, be enriched by notes of the results of his varied experience. We are glad to know that the Committee has shown its appreciation of his services by recommending the next Court of Quarter Sessions to allow him a pension of £700 per annum.

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#### INSANITY AS A CAUSE FOR DIVORCE.

In the Divorce Court on Friday, Dec. 16th, a very important case was settled in reference to insanity. The case was *Hunter v. Edney*. In this case a woman was married, but refused on the wedding night to allow the marriage to be consummated. The husband sent for the mother of the woman, who took her home after she had been seen by Dr. Miskin, a general practitioner in the neighbourhood. Dr. Miskin was of opinion that then she was insane. Some few weeks later Dr. Savage, of Bethlem, saw the case, and decided that the woman was suffering from melancholia, and not fit to enter into a contract, and that in his opinion she had so suffered for some time. The whole case took but a short part of one day, and there was really no opposition, for though the wife was in court, and elected to go into the witness-box, she did not deny any of the statements made, but said that she had no knowledge of some of the things which were proved to have taken place

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.