

does not seem to aid us in comprehending the connection. As to questions of operative interference, we hold that the same rules guide gynæcological operations in the sane and in the insane. Many alienists have entertained the highest hopes of obstetric aid in the mental diseases of women, and have in the great majority of individual cases been much disappointed. We are bound to put our patients in the best circumstances (gynæcological and other) for recovery, but we have to remember that we are not dealing with a disease which runs its course like a fever, but with an affection which, whatever its origin, is often essentially degenerative in its course. Again, there is another matter to consider. Affections of the female sexual organs are of such enormous frequency that it is difficult to understand how they can alone produce insanity in many cases. There must surely be in the majority of instances a *tertium quid*. Akin to this consideration is the reflection that affections of the sexual organs often seem to produce their effect upon the brain indirectly, that is through the mind. Thus the distress produced by sterility may be of a very complex nature, and may even lead to insanity (it is, by the way, a common cause of suicide among Oriental women), which we would no doubt be wrong to attribute solely to a reflex from trouble of the nerves of generation. Similarly mere vexation at the well-marked entry upon old age which the menopause is held to connote is sometimes a factor in producing depression at the climacteric period.

Aphasia and Will-making.

The difficulties which attend the making of a valid disposition of property by an aphasic are well known, and have attracted much attention. At the meeting of the British Medical Association in Edinburgh in 1898 the subject was very carefully discussed. Dr. Byrom Bramwell dealt exhaustively with it. Dr. Clouston proposed as a test that in every case where there was agraphia "the contrary case" or another disposition from the one apparently desired should be put, so as to secure not only an affirmative assent, but a negative dissent by the testator.

In the month of February the validity of the will of an aphasic was tried by Sir Francis Jeune, and a new and ingenious test as to whether a testator understood what she was doing, and could make an intelligible choice, was applied. The case was that of Miss Edith Marian Moore, who died in London on August 26th, 1899.

In July, 1899, Miss Moore had a stroke of paralysis, after which she suffered from aphasia and could not express herself by words. She was attended by Dr. Edmunds, who suggested that she should make her will. Under his advice two packs of large cards were printed, one pack containing the names of Miss Moore's relatives and the other pack the items of her property. Mr. Garrett, her solicitor, was sent for, and, at an interview, he dealt out the cards, one from each pack in turn. The name of Arthur John Moore was turned up, and Miss Moore intimated by signs that she wished him to have her Ballycohy estate in Ireland. The next matter was the disposal of her half-share under her father's will, over which she had the power of appointment, and the cards were again shuffled and the name of the relative selected. The shuffling of cards went on in the same manner until Miss Moore had disposed of all her property. Then came the selection of the executor. The cards were again shuffled, and as soon as her brother's name was turned up Miss Moore indicated by signs that he was her selection. She wanted another executor to be appointed, and the names of her other relations were shown her on the cards, but she did not come across the name she desired. She attempted to write it down, but what she wrote could not be read, and she then agreed that her brother should be her sole executor. The will was drawn up and afterwards carefully read over to Miss Moore, who put her mark to it, and Dr. Edmunds and Mr. Garrett witnessed the making of the mark.

Dr. James Edmunds, in the witness-box, said when the cards were used Miss Moore sorted them out in a perfectly intelligent and methodical way. She had the two packs spread out before her, went through them, and at last put them together in the way she wished. At the time she executed the will she perfectly well knew what she was about. It was not unusual for a person suffering from aphasia to put the wrong names to things. Miss Moore could not put together sentences nor write. The names of all her relatives were put on one of the

packs of cards. She could not give instructions on her own initiative.

Sir Francis Jeune said the mode of arriving at the wishes of the testatrix was novel, well intentioned, and most ingenious, and on the whole satisfactory. Taking the matter as it stood, nothing could have been more fair or more skilful, and he pronounced for the will, the costs to come out of the estate.

Editorial Comment.

The development of the JOURNAL is a matter of interest to all our members. It is published by the authority of the Association, and should therefore form, as we hope it does form, a fair index to the vital force of that body. The production of such a periodical, maintaining the high standard at which the *Journal of Mental Science* has always aimed, is nowadays not an easy task. There is immense activity in the field of psychiatry, and great efforts are being made everywhere to enable our science to keep pace with the general progress of medicine and with the rapid advance of some other and younger specialities.

Every year sees the establishment on the Continent and in America of new periodicals dealing with medico-psychology in its scientific aspects and as an art. Reference to our quarterly exchange list of journals will show a few of those which seem most representative and most valuable; but in addition to special journals we receive numerous reprints of articles from general medical journals dealing with our subject, as well as monographs, detached papers from works by several authors, etc. Surveying the vast and rapidly increasing volume of work which is being accomplished on all sides, there devolves upon us the arduous endeavour to keep pace with the entire progress of psychiatry, and to present to our busy readers well-sifted and thoroughly modern summaries of results.

It has for some time been evident that re-organisation is necessary in that department which deals with the current literature of insanity. The rearrangement of the Psychological Retrospects which have been prepared year by year at the cost of no little time and energy has been undertaken by