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ON THE BRAINS OF CRIMINALS.

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE BRAINS OF TWO MURDERERS.

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[Read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal.]

Mentally and bodily, we are largely the result of an hereditary organization, and the environment in which we have been reared. The child of a bushman nurtured in the family of a philosopher will be able, with favourable surroundings, to rise much above his race level; the child of a philosopher, reared among the bushmen, will not reach his paternal standard, but the grossness of the savage natures around him will have weight to pull him down, and what is fine will learn to sympathize with the clay. In the former case, the individual cannot transcend his organization; and in the latter, he cannot burst the iron bars of his environment. That the mental and moral status of a man is determined by the conformation and development of his brain is an axiom with the school of physiological psychologists. The conformation is a matter of inheritance; the development, of education (in its widest sense). The different mental conditions of individuals are the expression of subtle differences in cerebral structure, just as the diversity in the features of men is the result of minute variations in the arrangement of the tissues