

idiocy is moral depravity, associated with a high intellect and strong passions. Of strong impulses, associated with a moderate intellect, a good digestion and circulation, are composed most of our best men. They are endowed with an enthusiasm and power, which, without observing the multitude of obstacles at a distance, they surmount each as they arrive by the force of their nature; while a towering intellect associated with weak desire stands at the foot of the ladder, contemplating the rungs, and concludes that a view of the landscape is not worth the trouble of ascending.

As an illustration of the influence of bodily construction upon intelligence; I observed, in dissecting recently the body of a young man who died of epilepsy, that the arteries of the lower extremities were very small, the abdominal aorta would scarcely admit the point of the little finger, being more nearly the size of the common iliac. He had always suffered from weak circulation in the lower extremities, had occasional epileptic attacks, was very clever, and could sustain long continued mental labor, requiring very little sleep, perhaps three or four hours at most in a day. He had a small head, and probably owed his superior ability to the peculiarity in the distribution of his blood, rather than to development of brain. How many sleepless, restless epileptics have figured in the world's history!

The treatment of a case of idiocy would be suggested by a correct knowledge of its pathology. My experience is very limited, and this paper is put forth to stimulate enquiry. Some cases which appeared to be the result of innutrition and rickets I have put upon a tonic treatment, with pulverized egg shells in milk three times daily, with fresh air and nourishing food. One case, especially, improved mentally very rapidly, but died in a few months of diarrhoea.

I have removed portions of the skull in two cases, one of which, as stated, improved very much, the other very little.

It remains to be carefully distinguished between those cases where an operation would be useful and where it would not.

Systematic and intelligent education is very important, though I am convinced that the operation, in the case reported, was the means of giving capacity to the child, whether it was by

giving room to, or by stimulating the brain into action. Falls upon the head have been known to produce even more marked results. In the last case the wound healed very rapidly, there was no irritation, and it entirely recovered from the operation in a week, though I removed three lifts at one time, exposing a large surface which had been depressed since birth. The dura mater under the depression in the skull was very thick and opaque, and was sawn through in the operation, from which no harm whatever resulted. The brain was very pale in color.

The child improved somewhat in taking its food and in a few bodily movements, but after a month or so it relapsed into its former condition. Its attention can be attracted for a short time and the face wears a more discontented look than formerly. The parents reside in an ill-ventilated house, and little attention is given to the child beyond what is required for the wants of nature.

My reason for not reporting this case in full in this connection is, that after a careful consideration of the case, I was prevented from carrying out my views in reference to it.

The treatment of partial conditions belongs to the psychologist, the principle, however, is, that mind acting upon mind, is capable of exciting action in dormant faculties by sympathy, and, by a persevering repetition, they are awakened into an activity which is self-sustaining by the increased flow of blood directed to the part during the education, and the subsequent enlargement of the vessels is the physiological process that takes place in reform.

I should think that a great deal might be done in the treatment of the insane by a proper selection, and placing together those deranged minds which would have a beneficial influence upon each other, rather than, as I have observed in asylums, an indiscriminate commingling of all sorts into one pandemonium of confusion, a short residence in which would be enough to make a sane man mad.

[Since this paper was read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society, my attention has been directed by Dr. R. P. Howard, of this city, to a work by Griesinger, (of which, at the time, I was totally ignorant,) in which the causes of idiocy are fully treated. I am not aware, how-