

THE MORBID HISTOLOGY OF EPILEPTIC IDIOCY AND EPILEPTIC IMBECILITY.—As a result of histologic studies, ANDRIEZEN (*Brit. Med. Jour.*) has found in cases of epileptic idiocy and epileptic imbecility, a diffuse sclerosis or overgrowth of the neuroglia fiber cells in the brain substance and a co-extensive change in the nerve cells. The latter was of two kinds. 1. Defective development (fewness or slenderness) of protoplasmic processes. 2. Increase in amount and diffusion of pigment throughout the cell body, especially its basal part, and a displacement of the nucleus toward the apex of the cell. Later changes were a gradual destruction and atrophy of the nerve-cell processes, consequent on or co-extensive with the further overgrowth of the glia (sclerosis), until whole groups or islands of cells might be so destroyed. There is thus a common pathogenic basis for epileptic idiocy and epileptic imbecility, and for focal epilepsy occurring in the child, namely, anomalies of growth and nutrition impressed upon the growing nerve cell as well as upon the neuroglia cell, and affecting predominantly this or that area of the brain, frequently in territories corresponding to a particular vascular distribution. In cases of epilepsy supervening in adult life, after the brain cells had attained complete development, the changes found were, as regards the nerve cells, only of the second kind. But, in addition, these very frequently exhibited intranuclear vacuolation of the cortical cells also. The significance of the changes especially associated with the epileptic neurosis (more particularly when occurring congenitally or in early life, and therefore entailing also a more or less obvious degree of mental impairment) is still more striking when it is remembered that in the brains of non-epileptic idiots and imbeciles similar lesions are generally absent, and the convolutionary forms may be, and often are, plump and well formed, though inclined to simplicity of arrangement. These are to be looked on as general arrests of development, not complicated of course with the epileptic neurosis. In the brains of non-epileptic imbeciles sclerosis and microgyria are both conspicuous by their absence. When the epileptic neurosis is present, however, this process also is present, and the other changes detailed are also present in varying degrees. It is in the combination of these two classes of pathologic changes that lesions are to be found, the surest indication, the seal as it were, of epileptic idiocy or epileptic imbecility in the brain.—*Jour. Am. Med. Ass.*