

the cerebral cortex in its functional parts at least has an important bearing on the treatment of its disordered states. Dr. Clouston says* : " The unique fact about the nerve cell is the extreme slowness with which it develops after its full bulk has been attained. In this it differs from any and every other tissue. We may say that after most of the nerve cells of the brain have attained their proper shape and full size, it takes the enormous time of 18 or 19 years to attain such functional perfection as they are to arrive at. This striking fact of such extreme slowness of development of complete function no doubt shows, as no other fact could, the complexity and importance of the functions which the brain tissue subserve. . . . It is during this long period of gradual coming to perfection of the nerve cell that its hereditary influences for good or for evil come most into visible play. No doubt they exist before, but as yet we have no certain means of detecting them."

If we are to attack epilepsy successfully, we must go to the root of the trouble, and that is the unstable nerve cells. Really the foundation treatment of this disease is nothing more or less than an education of the cerebral cells.

Now we must for a moment consider the means through which the metabolism of these structures is carried on. The way in which they receive impressions is two-fold—(1) Through the blood, and (2) through the countless thousands upon thousands of afferent tracts which connects the cortex with the entire peripheral system. The endless changes taking place in the world about us are being constantly felt, and are ever constantly influencing for good or for evil our higher centres. There is no doubt that the functional power of the cerebral cells is more influenced by the sense impressions than it is by the chemical changes carried on through the influence of the blood. Both, of course, are necessary. Advantage should be taken of the preponderating influence of sense impressions on cerebral metabolism.

For some time I have been convinced of the importance of removing a young epileptic patient from his old surroundings.

* Morison Lectures, Edinburgh Medical Journal, January, 1891.