

On Idiocy.

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March. 1856

On Idiocy

There is no rank of society in which we do not find this unhappy state of the human mind — It is said, and doubtless with truth, that no town is without one of those whom God has set apart from his fellow-creatures, either a confirmed Idiot, or a harmless imbecile, a human being without human reasoning-power. Speaking to two clergymen who have the pastoral care of two not very extensive parishes in the east of Fifeshire, one told me that he had three Idiots, and the other two within his bounds. But who has not seen the "Daft Willie", and "fond Kiti" in every town of Scotland and England, who are almost encouraged as appendages to the place, and live by the liberality excited by compassion — Often too, at the cottage door, we see the more dreadful form of Idiocy, the helpless paralytic, strapped in his chair, in summer basking in the sun, or vegetating in the "ingle seat" in winter. This class in particular seems to be looked upon with a kind

of respect and awe by the lower orders, as if some
~~charm~~ ^{charm} hung about them.

But it is not to the lower classes of society alone that this awful ailment is confined; amongst the highest of the land it is by no means uncommon to hear of such cases, generally carefully kept in the background, beings to whom it would make no difference whether they lived in a palace or a poor's-house.

In the case of the Idiot we find the most inexplicable of not only medical, but moral phenomena. In the shape of humanity, the creature yet wants that intellectuality to which all men are heirs; deprived of this birthright, the Idiot might be esteemed on a level with the brute creation, were it not that he seems to want the instincts which minister to the preservation of mere animal life.

Under the head of Idiotcy I propose to consider, firstly, Amnesia or Congenital Idiotcy; and secondly, Amnesia or Acquired Idiotcy, with its modification Imbecility.

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D. G. M.

I. Imbecilia, or Congenital Idiocy.

Pinel makes Imbecilia the fourth class of mental alienations. He defines it as "une sorte de stupidité plus ou moins prononcée, un cercle très borné d'idées, et une nullité de caractère."

In another part he calls it a partial or total abolition of the intellectual and active faculties. Dr. Home says it is "that condition of the human brain, which from a morbid cause in the bodily organization, remains doubtful or undeveloped, so that the person is incapable of self-guidance, or of approaching to that degree of knowledge usual with others of his age."

Dr. Pritchard makes the following distinction between Idiocy and Imbecia - "The Idiot cannot reason, the madman reasons falsely; the Idiot acts from animal appetency, he has no will: the madman wills, but his reason being disturbed, his actions are not suitable to the actual relations of society."

Idiocy is defined in the *Lynouyges Francais* to be a defective perception and recognition of objects.

^{almost} In every case of Congenital Idiotcy some defect in the shape or size of the head is perceptible, rendering a full developement of the moral and intellectual powers impossible; nor can we describe the various shades of imperfect intelligence by which the defective organization of the brain is indicated.

Not only the mental, but also the bodily perceptions are frequently imperfect; touch is by no means so delicate as in the sane, not even in the case of Idiots blind from birth. The lowest class of Idiots is certainly far below the level of the beasts; for a dog forms an attachment to his master, and understands orders conveyed by signs and even by sounds; but in the Idiot no vestige of intelligence can be discovered; very frequently paralytic, the power of speech is either wanting, or so slightly developed as to be of no service, and the senses of taste and smell are equally imperfect; he depends on another for everything, even the most animal offices.

This, of course, is the picture of the very lowest class of these unfortunates. But congenital Idiotcy is met with in shapes by no means so revolting - Many, in fact the greater proportion, speak and hear although imperfectly; some are active and can be persuaded to work; they recognize friends, and

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avoid persons disagreeable to them: I have met with some who have an idea of time. In none but the very lowest class do you find the knowledge of the existence of a God altogether wanting. If you address them on the subject it is curious and affecting to see the effect produced. If, but the moment before, they have been in high spirits, laughing and pleased, yet if the subject be broached, the face suddenly assumes a serious aspect, and an undefined feeling of awe seems to pervade them. In the most complete idiot I ever saw, there seemed to have grown an affection for his nurse; and several evinced sorrow and concern on the death of Mr. Christie, late governor of the East side of the Edinburgh poor's-house, whose invariable kindness to those under his charge seemed to have endeared him to many. — How many, who are deprived of reason attach themselves to dumb creatures? Shunning their fellow creatures whom they feel are superior to them, they associate with birds and animals, entering into all their peculiarities and sports, familiarizing themselves with their habits, and seemingly even establishing a means of communicating their wishes to each other.

Although it is difficult to classify Idiot patients by the intensity of their symptoms, yet such a division as the following might not be unfeasible —

1st — Those who have no idea of a Supreme Being.

2nd — Those who have an idea of a Supreme Being.

3^o — Those who are capable of instruction.

1st — Those who have no idea of a God. This, doubtless, may be taken as a criterion of the lowest class of Idiots. Although I have never had an opportunity of examining an Idiot so low in the scale of humanity as those described by Pinel &c, yet there existed in the Workhouse of Edinburgh, till within the last few months, a patient who may be taken as a very fair example of the class.

Francis M^r Lure, Oct 34, (A.D. 1854). This poor creature came of a family in which the hereditary tendency was very well marked. His lower limbs were perfectly paralytic and atrophied, the legs drawn up to a right angle with the ham; his usual position was leaning on the right arm, swaying the upper part of his body, too and fro with a kind of see-saw motion, staring, or seeming to stare at the fire. He was quite dumb, and hearing very imperfect. His eyes were never fixed on one object for any length of time. His weight was not more than five stones. The measurements

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of his head were as follows - Circumference, $18\frac{3}{4}$ inches; from meatus auditorius externus of one side to that of the other side, across crown, 9 inches; from root of nose to occipital protuberance across the skull $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Occipital region from meatus to meatus $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Frontal region from meatus to meatus $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Long diameter $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Short diameter $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches. He required to be fed, and all animal duties were performed for him. Yet, he seemed to feel a kind of affection for the nurse of his ward, crying when she left the room; and fear for the man who used to shave and wash him. He was very subject to epileptic fits. A sketch of a cast of his head taken after death is annexed.

This was the lowest specimen of human nature I have met with; at least, have had the opportunity of carefully examining. Indeed it must be seldom that a fellow creature is found so debased as to possess not one spark of human nature.

The lowest I know, even one of this class, is often seen to be contentious, or amatory, or fond of making acquisitions of imaginary value; his desire for food is usually great and indiscriminate. In that "large discourse, looking before and after", he is utterly wanting.

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2nd. Those who have an idea of a God - I cannot but think that this might be taken as the leading symptom of the second class of Idiots. This class often exhibits vanity and cunning, but seldom seem to attain the higher faculties or qualities of benevolence or ~~attention~~ ^{attention} - Their perceptions are generally feeble; and of the faculties by which man forms ideas and communicates them to others, observes the order of phenomena, and reasons upon them, almost wholly deficient. Indeed, they differ but little from the first class except in the possession of the single idea above mentioned. They are, however, very widely separated from the next class, as it is perfectly impossible to instil into them the simplest instruction, mental or manual. There are three cases of this nature in the Poor-house, one of which follows.

Elizabeth Ogilvy. Oct 36. (A.D. 1854) is of a very happy temperament, so much so that she has acquired the name of "Topsy". She knows some of the people about her by name and sight; and says that she believes in a God and a Saviour, seemingly becoming and at the mention of either name even during one of her fits of merriment. She never could be taught the alphabet, or the simplest lesson either manual or mental. - The measurements of her head are

as follows. Circumference, 19 inches; across crown, $9\frac{1}{2}$; from root of nose to occipital protuberance $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches; occipital region from meatus to meatus; $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; Frontal sitta, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches; Long diameter $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; Short diameter, $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Since these measurements were taken she died; the weight of her brain was

This patient, though certainly very low in the scale of humanity, seemed to show a higher organization than the last case cited, which I cannot help associating with her idea of a supreme being, slight as that idea must have been.

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3^d. Those who are capable of receiving instruction. In this class we frequently meet with curious instances of memory, Knowledge of time &c. By patient and experienced teachers the pupil may be taught to read and write with tolerable precision. It is usually more difficult to teach them arithmetic, or any other branch of instruction which requires a train of reasoning, accurate attention, comparison, or judgment. The members of this class generally recognize their friends, and seem much pleased by any slight attention or notice. As an instance of this section I may mention the case of Margaret Stewart, oct 27 (A.D. 1854) residing in the Edinburgh Poor-house. She has been in the house since she was ten years of

In this class the knowledge of the existence of a Supreme Being is of course present.

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age; she has been taught to read and write, and to count a little, but hesitates, and seems undecided when she attempts either; she has been trained to housework, and assists in many household duties; she has also a wonderful memory, at one time being able to repeat the whole of the 119th Psalm with great correctness; she sings well, and occasionally conducts the psalmody in chapel. Her head is remarkably small and ill shaped - The measurements are as follows. Circumference, $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches; from ear to ear across crown, $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches; from root of nose to occipital protuberance across the skull, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches; occipital region from meatus to meatus, 9 inches; frontal ditto, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches; long diameter $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; short ditto, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

A very promising case is that of Jessie Jamieson, Oct 17 (A.D. 1854), who was admitted three years ago; she had had no instructions previous to entering the workhouse; since then she has attended the school of that establishment, and learned to read, write, and count - The improvement is good, but slow - her memory is tolerable. The head is ill-shaped; its dimensions are as follows - Circumference, 20 inches; from ear to ear across crown, 12 inches; from root of nose to occipital protuberance, $11\frac{1}{4}$; occipital region from meatus to meatus, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches; Frontal ditto, $10\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Long diameter, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; short ditto, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

I am well aware that many objections may be raised to a division like this; but still the above seem the leading features in the symptoms of the different grades of Idiocy, and the only ones by which you can divide the subjects of the malady.

~~you will meet with a patient in which two of the above symptoms are combined.~~

Pinel recommends that the head of the Apollo Belvidere should be taken as a model of the perfectly formed human head. Although it is very seldom that such perfection is met with, yet you will ~~always~~ ^{generally} find in the same a completely different conformation from those who suffer from a congenital deficiency of intellect. This applies more particularly to the frontal region; for it is not very uncommon to meet with an idiot with a round, or what is vulgarly called a "bullet-head", resembling in every respect the occipital and parietal region of many sane.

In some remarks, "there are a great number of beings brought into the world so deformed, that it is apparent they must be idiots, and so feeble that they do not live through infancy."

The following are the more general malformations

all of which I have noticed amongst the patients of the Edinburgh Poor's-house. —

1st. The head is contracted laterally and in front. This is the most common, and along with the 2nd malformation characterizes a very low class of Idiots.

2nd. The forehead is more or less depressed — the sketch of M^r de Lure instances this malformation. The plates of Spurzheim, Pinel &c figure it to an extent I never saw. e.

3rd. The occipital region depressed, so as to form nearly a right angle with the base of the occipital bone.

4th. The apex of the head frequently presents a conical shape.

5th. The apex is occasionally found very flat and depressed.

6th. The head rarely approximates to the normal shape. When this is found the degree of Idiocy is low, and generally the animal passions are strong.

7th. The head is nearly spher^{ic}ical — This also denotes a low degree of Idiocy.

Inixed all ~~two~~ drawings, No 1 very well exemplifying the depressed, low, and contracted forehead, with the conical apex — This is the cast of the head of Francis M^r de Lure, whose case has been already mentioned.



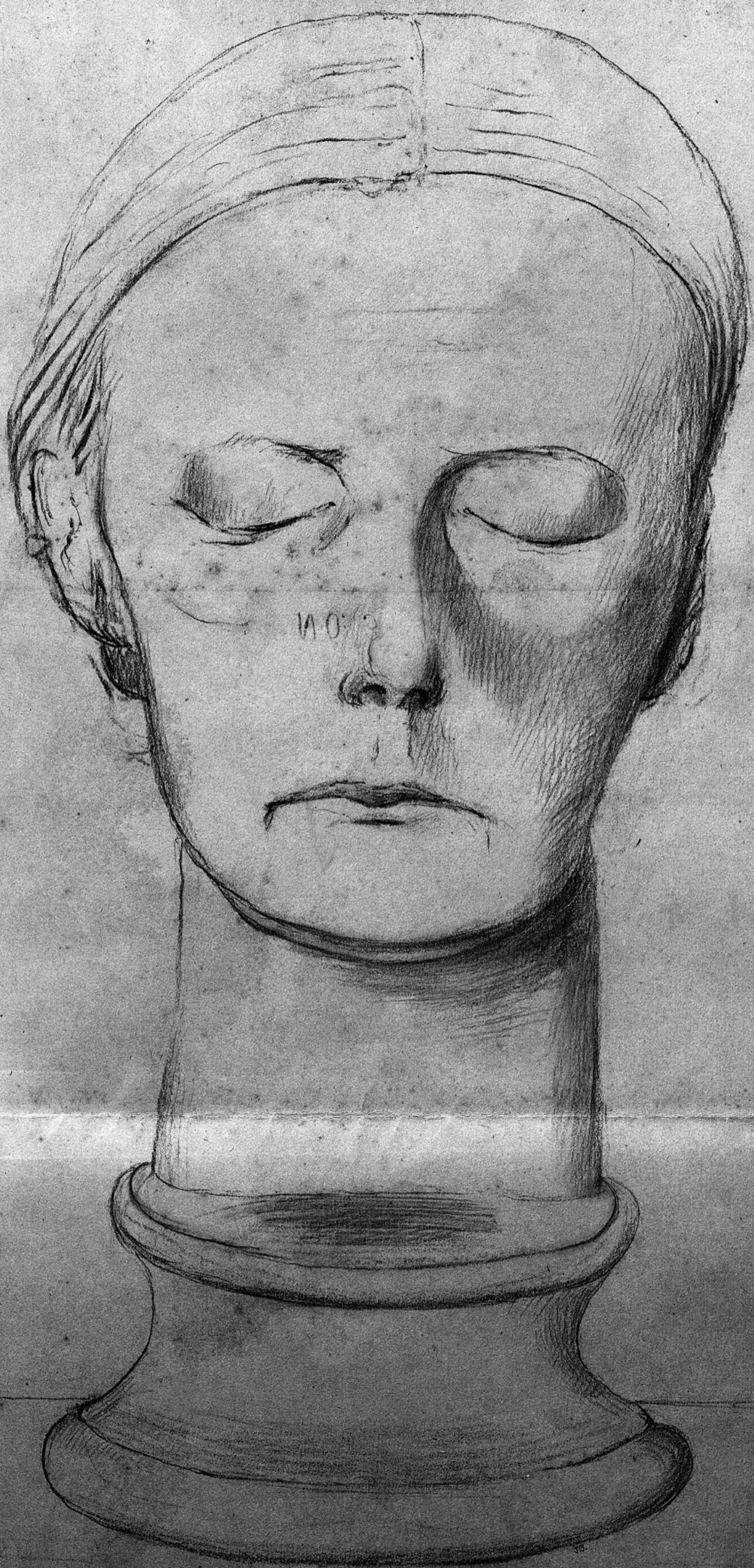
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NO. 3

On the inside of the calvarium, at the internal point corresponding with the extreme apex externally, a considerable depression was found, with a corresponding elevation outside, caused by a Pacchionian gland, as large as a full sized pea. Ross^{and 3} see the casts of the head of Elizabeth In^e Growther, which is of great size, in fact Dr. Munnro says it is the largest ^{Idiot} head he ever saw.

The general rule is that the Idiot's head is smaller than that of ordinary beings, the facial region bearing a very large proportion to the cranial; still they may be met with equal and superior in size to the sane head. Dr. Howe has stated in general terms that the results of his experiments and measurements show that there are no dimensions of the head, except extreme diminutiveness that can be relied on as a criterion of Idiocy; indeed a few of his worst cases are those in which the head approximates to the normal size and shape. Judging from the cases in the following table this opinion seems well founded, as with the exception of In^e Lure, those with the smallest heads by no means exhibited the worst symptoms of the malady; & In^e Growther who has without doubt the largest, is inferior to some of

The rest in intellect.

The following is a tabular view of the measurements of the heads of twelve congenital Idiots in the Edinburgh Workhouse.

No 1 indicates the circumference. 2 from meatus auditorius of one side to that of the other across the skull. 3. from root of nose to occipital protuberance across the skull. 4 occipital region from meatus to meatus. 5 frontal ditto. 6 long diameter. 7 short ditto.

Name	Age	Measurements in Inches						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Francis McSue	34	18 ³ / ₄	9	11 ¹ / ₂	6 ³ / ₄	8 ¹ / ₂	6 ³ / ₄	4 ⁷ / ₈
Elyth Ojilvie	36	19	9 ¹ / ₂	11 ¹ / ₂	7 ¹ / ₂	9 ¹ / ₂	6 ¹ / ₂	4 ⁷ / ₈
Geo Williamson	27	22	11	13	8	11	7 ³ / ₄	5 ¹ / ₄
Thos Jamieson		18 ³ / ₄	10	11 ¹ / ₂	7 ¹ / ₂	9	6	4 ¹ / ₂
Wm Lee	24	23	11 ¹ / ₂	14	8 ¹ / ₂	10 ³ / ₄	7 ³ / ₄	7 ³ / ₈
Elyth McGrother	32	20	15 ¹ / ₂	13 ¹ / ₂	9	11 ¹ / ₂	7 ¹ / ₂	6 ³ / ₄
Maugt Stewart	37	19 ¹ / ₂	11 ¹ / ₄	11 ¹ / ₂	9	10 ¹ / ₂	7 ¹ / ₂	5 ¹ / ₂
Mary O'Hara	29	19 ¹ / ₄	12 ¹ / ₈	11 ⁵ / ₈	8 ¹ / ₂	11	7	5 ¹ / ₂
Elyth Forest	36	19	11	11	10	10 ¹ / ₂	7	5 ¹ / ₂
Jessie Jamieson	17	20	12	11 ¹ / ₄	9 ¹ / ₂	10 ¹ / ₂	7 ¹ / ₂	5 ¹ / ₂
Jean Blair	62	18 ³ / ₄	13	12 ¹ / ₂	8 ¹ / ₂	11 ¹ / ₄	7 ¹ / ₂	5 ¹ / ₂
Revie Blair	40	19 ¹ / ₂	11 ¹ / ₂	12 ¹ / ₂	9	10 ¹ / ₂	7 ³ / ₄	5 ¹ / ₂

Average.

19³/₄. 11¹/₄. 12¹/₄. 8¹/₂. 10¹/₂. 7⁵/₈. 5¹/₄.

It is not so much the size as the shape of the head which should be taken as a criterion; for although it has been stated that patients having heads approximating to the natural form are very low in the scale, yet these cases are so very few and so very few between, as to form no comparison with the ultimate forms of Idioy not with in those with ill formed heads. Indeed in one case in which the head was opened, although the exterior presented nothing very out of its appearance in shape or size, yet the calvarium was unequally thick and dense, particularly at internal points corresponding with the temples externally; so much so, that if, at these places, the bone had been planed to the thickness of the rest of the skull, a very ill-shaped head would have been produced. So with ~~all~~ ^{most} large Idiot heads, it will be found that the calvarium is very thick and dense, forming a receptacle for the brain by no means larger than a skull measuring an inch or an inch and a half more in circumference. Still there is no doubt but that the Idiot's head in general is smaller than normal, but appears even less than it really is from its peculiar shape and the proportion the cranial portion bears to the facial.

Dr Gall has laid it down as a rule that when the first measurement is less than seventeen inches, and the third less than eleven, the Amentia is almost always complete. Of the twelve cases in the table of Idiots in the Edinburgh Poorhouse, there are none the circumference of whose head is less than than $18\frac{3}{4}$ inches, nor the third less than 11 inches; still most of them are very low in the scale. Dr Gall also states that when the measurements are less than the figures mentioned above, the case is sure to be one of the very lowest class.

None of the measurements of the cases I have cited are so small as those laid down by most writers as certainly productive of Idiocy; but this may, to some extent depend on the thickening of the skull which is so frequently found in cases of Amentia. This is supposed by Andral to be caused by Chronic Hydrocephalus, which acts on the bones of the skull in two ways; either rendering them soft and thin; or causing increase in thickness. The latter result is brought about by the cavity, left between the internal surface of the ^{calvarium} ~~cranium~~ and the membranes, by the absorption of the fluid, gradually becoming filled up by a

deposition of new bone, membranous interspaces being left between the laminae of new bone, which, if the patient arrive at adult age, are filled up by *Ossa Wormiana*, as has been shown by Rudolphus and Breschet. The bones in such cases are of ivory hardness. Erysipelas and exostosis are said to produce the same effects; but these diseases could hardly interfere with the internal surface of the calvarium so as to affect the brain.

There is no doubt then that deformity of the skull is almost invariably accompanied by Idiocy.

This deformity principally affecting the anterior regions, the seat of the intellectual faculties is of course most affected. In some few cases of which post-mortem examinations were made in the Edinburgh Workhouse, the brain presented very various appearances. In some the cerebral substance was of abnormally ^{firm} consistence, in others softening was present. In the case of *M^r Surr* the brain was abnormally firm, the convolutions round and regular, the anterior lobes small; the cerebellum not out of proportion to the cerebrum, and the optic thalamic and corpora striata natural. In other cases the

convolutions have appeared small and flat, whilst others have presented nothing abnormal, with the exception of diminutiveness.

Spurzheim says, "the brain of the Idiot never resembles that of a sane person." Various lesions have been noticed; some authors laying great stress on the appearance of flatness of the convolutions, others on the diminution of their number.

Breschet mentions the case of a girl in whom the anterior lobes were wanting. Esquirol examined a brain of which the cortical substance was absent, and irregular granulations took the place of convolutions; the white substance of the right hemisphere was normal, that of the left was represented by a sac containing fluid. In this case the head was not smaller than natural, and normal in shape; the limbs of the right side were atrophied, and paralysed.

Hypertrophy and atrophy of the brain seem to occur in some cases. In the latter the ventricles are narrowed, and the convolutions irregular, hardened and discoloured. (Esquirol). Portau considers that the last results are caused by softening, followed by absorption.

The microscope has as yet thrown no light on

the pathology of Idioty; several poorhouse cases were examined by its aid, but nothing abnormal could be ~~examined~~ discovered.

When examined chemically the Idiot's brain is found to contain less phosphorus than that of the sane. Carpenter considers that the contents of the nerve cells and tubes consist of phosphorized fats, and that the amount of phosphorus increases in proportion to the amount of mental activity exhibited. In the case of the Idiot the phosphorus amounts to about one half the quantity found in the sane brain. (M. Courbe)

With the exception of the malformation of the head, it is impossible to state a direct cause of Idiocy; so that we must be content to consider those circumstances which more particularly present themselves as associated or co-existent with that condition.

To this subject Dr. Howe has given particular attention, and has collected much valuable information, tending greatly to throw light on the subject.

The first thing to be observed is "the low condition of the physical organization of one or both parents." Dr. Howe, from his researches, has come to the conclusion, that parents can transmit to the offspring ~~only~~ such qualities and powers as actually belong to them; and that a peculiarity of organization in either parent may be, and probably will be, transmitted when the germ, or element, or paladium is given to the child. He says, "if ever the race is to be relieved of the tithes of the bodily ills which flesh is now heir to, it must be a clear understanding of, and a willing obedience to, the law which makes parents the blessing or the curse of the children; the givers of strength, and vigour, and beauty, or the dispensers of debility, and

disease, and deformity." - A great many Idiots have one parent at least idiotic. Dr. Howe found 50 Idiots, whose parents were one or both idiotic or insane. If no mental impairment exist, in all probability some cachexia can be traced, which though not very evident in the parents, becomes fully developed in the child. The hereditary taint may be looked upon as a predisposing cause, which may be productive of no effect, until called into action by an exciting cause.

Idiocy, like most congenital diseases, may lie dormant for one or two generations, or may be much modified, but sooner or later it is almost sure to reappear, in some cases in awful strength. Dr. Howe found forty-five parents each with two idiotic children, thirteen with three, eight with five, one with seven, one with nine, and one with eleven.

The near blood-relationship of the parents may be looked upon as an undoubted exciting cause. In most families some congenital peculiarity of temper is observable; which, although it does not amount to more than peculiarity in the parents, will be very likely to be increased to actual Idiocy in the offspring, from the fact of the

idiosyncracies of two individuals being concentrated in one. Dr. Howe made inquiry into the parentage of 359 Idiots; in 17 families the parents were blood relations. In one of these families there were five Idiotic children born; in five, four each; in three, three each; in two, two each; and in one, six. In these seventeen families ninety-five children were born; forty-four Idiots, twelve scrofulous and puny, one deaf, and one a dwarf; fifty-eight in all of low or imperfect health, and only thirty-seven of even tolerable health.

Intemperance of Parents. The weakness of constitution and laxity of frame induced in such parents is transmitted to the unhappy offspring, who are "deficient in bodily and vital energy, and predisposed by their very organization, to have a craving for alcoholic stimulants."

The parents of 145 out of 300 Idiots were known to be habitual drunkards. (2nd report).

The condition of the mothers during gestation seems to have some influence on the future of the child. Dr. Howe found that during gestation two mothers of Idiots were insane, two habitually intemperate, sixteen sickly and feeble, seven suffered from pight, one had

fits and received a blow on the abdomen, and another suffered from violent parturition. Attempts to procure abortion may affect the child's intellect; at least seven children were rendered idiotic, says the report, by these unsuccessful attempts. Young women thus sometimes try to get rid of their burden, or conceal their shame; not succeeding, they afterwards marry, and the child is born at the proper time, though idiotic. Other children are successively born of the same parents, and give no evidence of ill-health or unsoundness of mind. Several cases are among those alluded to; one woman had seven sound children, and another had six, born in wedlock, though the eldest child of each of them, upon whom abortion had been attempted, was idiotic. (2nd Report. 90.)

These are the principal so called causes of Idioty. In some instances the result may be looked ^{on} as more the misfortune than the fault of the parents; but in what multitudes of cases do we find the imprudence, the licentious habits, and long continued and disgusting vices of the parents, the cause of endless misery to their unhappy offspring? In truth, "the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, unto the third and fourth generation."

I have purposely omitted speaking of that particular form of Idiocy, called Cretinism, as it would be difficult to do so without appearing to pirate from the admirable prize thesis of Dr. Blackie, lately published. As my subject, however, would be very incomplete without some notice of it, I beg to make a few observations on some statements of Dr. Blackie, with which I can only partially agree. — He seems inclined to think that Cretinism is not so rare in this country as is generally supposed; but that many, which have been considered cases of Idiocy, are in fact Cretins; and produces a few instances to support his assertions. The case of the boy living amongst the Braird Hills, (p. 47, 48) seems well made out; but that the Idiot residing at Moffat is a Cretin I cannot allow. I have seen the case myself, and have obtained further information on the subject from a medical man residing in the town. The head is very much deformed, very much resembling that of M^c Lure, but it has been so from birth, and the rachitic condition which pervades most of the other bones of his body, has not affected the bones of the head. Dr. Blackie considers that the "cause of Cretinism

is to be attributed to a cachectic state of the body, which, inducing scrophulous rickets of the cranial bones, and causing them to press on the nerves at their origins, produces the phenomena of Idiocy". Now out of nearly ~~thirty~~ cases of Idiocy in the Workhouse of Edinburgh I am not aware of one case in which the bones of the skull are diseased, nor did I ever see a case of Idiocy complicated with joint. Although there are cases of Rachitic Idiots, still none of them agree with Dr Blackie's description of Cretinism. Dr Blackie gives no distinctions between Idiotism and Cretinism, and indeed seems to think that hardly any exist; yet the great mass of Idiots in this country could only be placed under his class of congenital Cretins, as in these alone is there deformity of ^{the} cranium independant of the rickety cachexia. Now, I have never found or heard of a case of Idiocy proper, true amentia, in which congenital causes could not be traced. If this be the case then all our Idiots must be looked on as congenital cretins. But do we find the symptoms of Cretinism as described by Guggenbühl and others amongst British Idiots? By no means, many, indeed the great proportion have the use

of their limbs, and, amongst those who have not, the loss much more frequently depends on paralysis than rachitis. Idiocy depends on imperfect cerebral development; Cretinism, on a cachexia affecting the frame, and, through the frame affecting the origin of the nerves. Indeed, it seems more than probable that Cretinism is one way in which the scrofulous diathesis shows itself, the general appearance of the patients, as to complexion, features, and proportions, vividly pointing out a lymphatic temperament. Another point of difference is that the deformity of Idiot crania is generally confined to the anterior and superior regions, in the Cretin exclusively to the occipital. Again, goitre, which certainly has a mysterious, but ill defined connection with Cretinism, is seldom, if ever, met with amongst Idiots of this country, except in districts where goitre is common, and by no means more amongst them, than amongst the same inhabitants.

Dr Blackie also considers that Cretinism is found more frequently in lime districts than in others; Idiots, on the other hand, are distributed far and wide, irrespective of the geological confirmation of the soil. — There cannot be

a doubt but that the two diseases are different, and although some few isolated cases of Cretinism may be discovered amongst the ill fed and ill clad inhabitants of the mountainous districts of Great Britain, yet in the Lowlands we may be thankful that no such horrible spectacles are to be met with as the bloated and deformed Cretin.

2nd. Dementia, or acquired Idiocy.

The general symptoms of this class of mental impairment are very much the same as those of Lementia, perhaps, however, seldom, if ever, falling so low in the scale of humanity as the worst forms of Congenital Idiocy.

The patient suffering under Dementia, very frequently has delusions of various kinds, & also is liable to fits of maniacal paroxysms. Like the congenital Idiots their states are very variable, but in all there is an oppression & gradual declension of the faculties - They are inattentive to surrounding objects irritable in temper, dirty & slovenly - They may be seen mumbling to themselves, although seldom speaking to any one.

The most common cause of Dementia is Mania, the paroxysms of which gradually lessen and lessen, the lucid moments also becoming shorter & shorter, until the patient's mind seems to settle down into hopeless Idiocy - This is particularly the case in young females, afflicted with mania, which is very frequently found to degenerate into Dementia - In such cases as these, however, the mind sometimes reacquires its strength, as if it had been suffering under

some temporary debility of the brain - A state of this kind is induced in delicate women by menorrhagia & miscarriage, when temporary dementia seems to issue, which frequently disappears on the return of bodily strength - This, however, is not always the result; for the mind, in some cases, after successive attempts at recovery followed by renewed oppression, settles into confirmed dementia. This form is very frequently conformed with Melancholia; but grief & despondency have nothing to do with its production; it is merely the result of diminished power -

Melancholia, however, is frequently a cause of dementia, or rather dementia supervenes on it. The patient after the first attack of melancholy seems to sink, without any violent paroxysm, into a state of entire mental feebleness. Attempts at restoration seem to be made, lasting sometimes for hours, sometimes for a day, & at regular intervals; but any slight excitement, physical or mental, throws them further back.

A more fertile cause of dementia than Melancholia is Paralysis - In cases of Paralysis the mind is variously impaired; frequently those who least physically ^{suffer} having more mental

liberation and vice versa. Suddenly, in the midst
 of his usual employments, the patient is attacked
 by paralysis so slight that it is hardly visible
 at first; but, in a short time his whole appearance
 is changed, & the faculties of his mind and body
 are seen to be much impaired: his walk becomes
 shambling and unsteady, somewhat resembling that
 of one intoxicated, the joints of the legs seem loose,
 & those limbs are almost dragged after him. The
 muscles of the face become flabby and flat, the
 tongue sometimes is protruded from the mouth, & the
 speech is much impaired. At the same time all
 determination of character is lost; & the formation
 of a will of his own, or the carrying out of the slight-
 est wish seem equally impossible. There is frequent-
 ly a curious exaltation of ideas in such cases. It
 is thus described by Dr. Conolly. "Remembering most of
 the transactions which have formerly occupied
 his attention, & retaining his family and social
 attachments, he cannot comprehend why he has
 been removed from home, and is often irritable
 and angry on account of the supposed injustice
 done to him. He even fancies himself fitter for
 business than he was before, and calculates the
 great loss he sustains by being debarred from

his customary employment. Every morning he requests to be supplied with pen, ink, and paper, and he writes letters, perhaps very well expressed, referring to past undertakings, making statements of accounts, and, from partial loss of memory, claiming money as due which has long been paid. The same letter will be written by some patients thus affected again & again, week after week, for months, and nearly word for word each time; but neither in the letters, nor in conversation, is any incoherence for a time exhibited. Subsequently, the usual exaltation of ideas in these paralytic cases supercedes on the first, & fatal impairment, the patient being, even from the first, disqualified from all future efficient exertion. More extensive delusions follow; prolixity passes into incoherence, and the imbecility of the mind extends onwards to the dementia in which life closes." — This, of course, is a picture of the very worst form of the disease. Many paralytic patients although unable to take part in the ordinary active duties of life, still act and speak sensibly on most subjects, and the impairment remains slight for a length of time if they be carefully protected from anxiety and turmoil. The principal symptoms seem to

be indecision of character, quickness of temper, & a peculiar kind of hesitation which seems to pervade all their actions.

Epilepsy is a very ripe cause of Dementia; the stages and symptoms of the disease being exactly the same as those noticed when Dementia ensues on Mania.

Blows on the head, fractures or depressions of the calvarium, and loss of cerebral substance induce Dementia characterized by great irritability of temper. In Dr. Syms' wards I saw a case of a man on whose head a heavy iron weight had fallen from a considerable height, the sharp edge causing fracture and depression of the bone. The spiculae were extracted or clipped off with the cutting forceps, and the membranes found to be uninjured. The wound of the scalp healed well, leaving an opening in the substance of the left parietal bone about two inches and a half in length, and three quarters of an inch in breadth, which, of course, never closed, the brain being protected by strong indurations of the surrounding scalp. Although exhibiting no very positive signs of Dementia, still a peculiarity might be observed, especially in the rapidity of his actions, the limbs seeming

to jerk when called into play. He, also, would not look you straight in the face, & his eyes were always wandering and unsteady. The nurse told me that his temper had become very irritable and overhearing, and that he often gave way to violent passions. It would have been very interesting to have watched this case, but the patient, on leaving the Infirmary, went to a distant part of the country, and, of course, was lost sight of. The same symptoms have frequently been observed in the cases of soldiers wounded in the head. Excesses in living, drunkenness, unnatural vices, old age, and ~~also~~ intense study tend to produce Dementia.

Esquirol divides Dementia into two species, simple and complicated, each species having four varieties. The proportions of poor women so affected in La Salpêtrière, and of those in his private establishment, who are persons ~~of~~ in good circumstances, and of both sexes, he has thus arranged—

Table of the species of Dementia.

Simple species.

In La Salpêtrière. In Esquirols Estab^{ment}

1. Acute Dementia.....	10	11
2. Chronic Dementia.....	43	32
3. Senile Dementia.....	35	2
4. Intermittent Dementia ...	7	2

Complicated species.

1. Melancholic Dementia...	34	20
2. Maniacal Dementia.....	21	8
3. Convulsive Dementia.....	4	6
4. Epileptic Dementia.....	30 in 289 Epileptics.	

Table of Ages when Dementia occurred.

Age.	In La Salpêtrière.	In Esquirols Est.	Age.	In La Salpêtrière.	In Esquirols Est.
15	2	1	50	20	15
20	4	5	55	16	4
25	9	14	60	16	1
30	14	9	65	10	1
35	9	8	70	11	1
40	13	9	80	13	1
45	16	12	87	1	0

In relation to the causes Esquirol has them thus divided.

1. Acute Dementia proceeds from transient excesses in diet, fever, haemorrhages, & too great evacuations.

of any kind, metastasis, suppression of an habitual discharge, or debilitating treatment of insanity.

2. Chronic Dementia proceeds from the various forms of Insanity, epilepsy, apoplexy, paralysis, intense study, drunkenness, masturbation, and abuse of sensual gratifications.

3. Senile Dementia may proceed solely from the progress of age, or may be the consequence of long-standing insanity to that period of life when the intellects have a natural tendency to decay. This class of patients is designated by the French *insensés*.

4. Intermittent Dementia is connected with any of the first three conditions - It is likewise complicated with melancholia, mania, epilepsy, convulsions, especially with paralysis, and also with a state of cachexia. Perhaps the most lamentable and distressing form of Dementia is that resulting from an overtasked brain - Minds of the highest order are by no means exempt; indeed most of the literary stars of this century have ended their days in mental oblivion. The cases of Walter Scott and Professor Wilson will serve to illustrate this statement. The diminution of the activity of the brain has been noticed and commented on by men of genius as they remarked it in their own cases - James when 72, in a letter to a friend,

remarks, "I rise in the morning tolerably active and disposed to work with mind and muscle;" "though I boast of my strength in a morning yet evening comes before its time - my afternoon is all evening, and my evening midnight." There is not a better instance of the degeneration of a mind of great genius than in the case of Robert Southey - In an address to him a few months before his death there are the following beautiful lines, which seem to illustrate the usual fate of men -

"We hurry to the river we must cross,
 And swifter downwards every footstep winds,
 Happy who reach it ere they count the loss
 Of half their faculties and half their friends."

The subject of this particular form of the malady is also usually of an unhappy and desponding character: friends and relations long since dead are conjured up, and circumstances occurring in youth present themselves to his imagination. The loss of memory is not always complete, for, although he forgets what has happened within the previous day, week, month or year, still the most vivid recollections of scenes, persons, and incidents, almost forgotten when the mind was ~~perfectly~~ healthy, suggest themselves, and are spoken of as if they

were present, or had occurred a short time previous. In fact all idea of time is lost. Frequently great agitation and restlessness are observed, and a whole house is made wretched by the unmanly excitement and rage of a frantic helpless old man - After some months this state is happily succeeded by a degree of insensibility, and life draws more quietly to its close. But, sometimes, these unhappy agitations continue to the hour of death.

Females are not so liable to this form of dementia as males, as the tenor of their way in life is usually less exciting, and their faculties are rarely called into such active employment. When, however, it does occur the symptoms are general debility, frequently complicated with religious despondency, and an apprehension of ruin - She accuses herself of failing in her religious duties, of hypocrisy, and fears that she is beyond redemption - With all this her usual conversation does not betray an impaired mind, until the subject of one or other of her delusions is touched on.

There is still another cause of dementia, viz, old age, which gives rise to the form of the affection called senile dementia. Although the individual

may have passed a life of ease and comfort, surrounded by all the elegancies ^{and comforts} of life, by attentive relations and friends, still as time advances his faculties give way, memory departs, and complete indifference is evinced even to the nearest and dearest. This is the last stage of existence, so finely treated by Juvenal,

— omni

Membrum damno major dementia, quae nec
 Nomina servorum, nec vultus agnovit amicum,
 Cum quibus praeterita coenavit nocte, nec illos
 Duos genuit, quot eduxit.

Sat. X.

Dr. Conolly gives two curious instances of passions arising in the minds of these patients quite inconsistent with their advanced age. He quotes from Esquirol the cases of two women, one aged sixty-four, the other eighty, who both fell desperately in love with ~~two~~ young men — Their conduct was that of love-sick girls, agitated, excited, gay, sorrowful, impatient, and extravagant, forming schemes for the future, imagining various obstacles, and in fact gave themselves up mind and body to men who could only laugh at and pity them. — They both sunk into melancholia and died.

The same authority gives a curious instance of another phase of the malady - he says, "I knew a retired man of business, of tranquil life and easy fortune, who, as well as his attached wife, had attained the age of eighty years. Both became affected with senile dementia. Both were occasionally violent. Neither seemed to recognise the other. The old lady was the most restless; she did not know her own house; & would insist at night upon being taken home: so that her family were obliged to put her into a chair, and let her be down round the drive, and brought into the house again which satisfied her. She knew all her friends and relatives, except her husband, whom she always treated as a stranger, speaking of him as of one absent. After dining with him, she would give orders to the servants to prepare Mr. —'s dinner, meaning her husband, as he would probably, she said, return rather late."

It would be useless to multiply instances which are but only too common - The beautiful descriptions of Sir Walter Scott in his "Antiquary" of the old hildane Elspeth must realise the case to every mind. It concludes with an extract from an old play which beautifully exemplifies the subject.

"Life ebbs from such old age, unmarked & silent,
 As the slow neap-tide leaves you stranded gally. -
 Late she rocked merrily at the least impulse
 That wind or wave could give; but now her keel
 Is settling on the sand, her mast has taken
 An angle with the sky from which it shifts out,
 Each wave receding, shakes her less & less,
 Till, bedded on the strand, she shall remain
 useless and motionless."

No mention of Idioty supervening on Idiotism
 in children; nor ^{of that} consequent on Idiocy,
 or care of the puerator.
 As pathological anatomy
 Etiology much too general

Prevention and Treatment of Idiocy.

This is a subject which has been brought very strongly before the public within the last few years, and much has been done by private charity. But much still remains, more, indeed, than private energy could possibly accomplish. Public legislation is urgently called ^{for} not only to ameliorate the condition of the idiot himself, but, (looking at the subject in a lower, but at the same time very important light,) to remove a nuisance from the public at large; The expense attendant on the ward of Idiots within ~~the~~ workhouses, of course swelling the amount of Poor-tithes, calls for measures to prevent, as much as possible, the propagation of Idiocy. The following are some remarks of Dr. Pritchard on the subject: "In adverting to the inquiry, whether any means could be adopted that would tend to diminish the extent of this evil, we are struck by the obvious consideration that the number of the deranged persons in the community might be very much lessened, if it were possible to regulate or establish any surveillance over the marriages of the lower orders, or if some measures could be adopted to prevent the

propagation of Idioty, and an hereditary tendency to madness. Idiots who are at-large wander about the country, and the females often bear children. I have frequently seen in Herefordshire, a female idiot, who was said to have borne several children by unknown fathers - Sir Andrew Halliday has made similar observations. We should hear without surprise of the permission of such things in Turkey or Kaffirland having police regulations, it would not be expected. All pauper Idiots and lunatics ought to be kept in proper asylums, where every possible alleviation of their calamitous lot should be afforded them, and the public should be protected against such evils as those just pointed out. But perhaps, the propagation of mental disorders might be prevented in other ways by some restrictions on marriages. Intermarriages between near relations should be prohibited; and the known prevalence of Idioty or madness in a family should be made, if possible, what at present it is not, at least among the lower classes, a bar to its propagation. The fact that insanity prevails so much in agricultural districts indicates that its development is favoured by some of the circumstances connected

with the condition of agriculturalists. The labouring of women in the field during pregnancy, perhaps as Halliday suggests, may be one cause; hard labour and low diet, to which males are subjected, may, perhaps, have an influence on the offspring propagated by them; and in Wales and Scotland particularly, this may ~~be~~ enter into the number of causes, which render Idioty so prevalent. (Pritchard on Insanity).

The Medical Treatment of Idiots resolves itself almost always into mere regulations for diet and exercise; except in such cases where a scrophulous cachexia shows itself; the treatment in such cases is of course constitutional, as well as in those afflicted with epilepsy, chorea, &c. When maniacal paroxysms are met with, the exhibition of Antimony, cathartics, and opiates seems to lower the attack. Slight restraint is also necessary; as, if left altogether to himself even in a padded room, his violent exertions might reduce the strength, so much as to make rallying doubtful. The cold shower-bath is much used in the workhouse, and with the best effects. Some Idiots are in the habit of scratching the skin of their hands, and thus

establishing sores which are very difficult to heal on account of them continuing the irritation; in such cases, the "mufflers" are necessary, as likewise when the patient is given to self-abuse.

From the state of dirt many Idiots live in, various skin diseases are by no means uncommon; in general it is not found more difficult to overcome these diseases in Idiots than in others. Epilepsy and Chorea are the most frequent aggravations, especially the former which frequently proves fatal; of course the treatment does not differ from that of sane cases. Bed-sores are very intractable in bed-ridden paralytics. Dr. Armand Jobert narrates a curious case in which an Idiot afflicted with eclampsia was cured by accidental poisoning by stramonium, after all the usual remedies had been tried. The patient had eaten five of the thorn-apples, and with difficulty was recovered from their effects.

For the moral treatment of the Idiot, Experience, patience, perseverance and enthusiasm are the chief articles of the pharmacopoeia. The world must hold in everlasting honor and esteem such men as Leguire, Voisin, Vallée, Guggenbuhl &c.

whose undying enthusiasm has been the means of rescuing numbers of human beings from mental oblivion, not only making ~~them~~^{life} of value to themselves, but them of value to society. In justice, however, to a living British psych^{ol}ogist, the name of Dr. Poole, author of the articles "Mental Diseases," and "Education" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and Encyclopaedia Edinensis, ought honorably to be mentioned. In the latter article, published in 1827, he brought the subject strongly before the notice of the public, and assisted, if he did not originate, a scheme which may be looked on as one of the noblest ever proposed.

The cause of the Idiot is spreading far and wide, and with such institutions as those of Perigate, Dundee, and Bath much will be done to ameliorate the condition of this unhappy class in our own country.

Highgate
Colchester

It is an axiom of all who undertake the training of the Idiot, that there is a mind hidden behind a cloud; and the gradual "manifestation of mind" becomes the leading principle. It is of importance for the teacher to observe and watch carefully for the exhibition of some particular like or dislike, upon which to work.

But, before any direct instruction is given, the health of the pupil should be carefully attended to, regular hours and exercise insisted on, and perfect cleanliness inculcated. An idiot who, although he has the power, occasionally does not know how to use his limbs; in such cases, he should be placed in such positions as to cause him to do so involuntarily, such as placing him on an upright ladder, and, of course proper precautions against ~~accidents~~ accidents being taken, withdrawing support. Gymnastic exercises soon teach him the use of his limbs, which knowledge being acquired, he is generally found to be eager to make use of. Lessons in manual labour should be next given; some patients in the Edinburgh workhouse were easily taught to dig from a bed of clay which was discovered within the walls, and most willingly and safely did they work. Several, also, have been taught household work, and some even act as nurses in their respective wards. There is one imbecile who engraves neatly, and another, a poor German who has lost one arm, who cuts out very neat ornaments in wood, with the sole assistance of a pen-knife. Along with this kind of instruction

The patient must be taught to dress himself, and to take his food in a decent manner, which being acquired, he should be introduced amongst the pupils who are further advanced: by which means a feeling of self respect seems to grow on him. — The next grand step is to teach him difference of form, colour, size and number. This may be done by placing before him pieces of wood of different colours, sizes, and forms, and making him take up one corresponding to that which the teacher holds in his hand; thus giving rise to imitation, which may be elaborated, by "line on line, and precept on precept," to a train of reasoning. This should be accompanied by making him use his voice, if it be exercised only by shouting or unintelligible gibberish. The manner in which the faculty of speech is modified in the various forms of mental impairment is worthy of remark; for in the insane, even more strikingly than in the sane, the tone of voice is a kind of index to the mind, and the mode of speech peculiar to the mental character. The long and loud talking, and the bursts of voice of patients affected with acute or chronic mania;

the low whisperings of the melancholic; and the utter silence of those who have fallen into the state of dementia; must have been noticed by all who have visited a lunatic asylum. The power of using this important gift is also almost always defective to a greater or less degree in persons of congenital imbecility of mind; less, probably in many cases, from defective organization of the organs of speech, than from the mental incapacity to learn the uses of speech, or to connect words with their limited ideas and perceptions. When the fact is established that the voice exists to a useful extent, the pupil should be placed, before the teacher, and made to imitate the motions of the mouth in speaking; at the same time attracting his attention to some object, the name of which must be repeated over and over until the word is learnt; next the use of the object should be shown and explained; as, for instance, if he be in the garden let him be shown what a spade is, then teach him to say the word, and lastly the use, "the spade digs;" in this way along with his manual, he also acquires a mental lesson. By thus teaching him to understand and employ artificial and natural signs for ideas, the

intellectual faculties are necessarily enlarged.

During this part of his course of treatment some mental idiosyncrasy will in all probability be developed, which should be carefully worked on, as the spark to be gradually fostered into a flame.

It is important not only for the teacher, but also for the medical jurist, to remember that Idiotcy and Imbecility may in some instances chiefly affect the moral faculties. Dr Rush, so long ago as 1786, in a paper read to the American Philosophical society, pointed out that what was called the moral faculty or moral sense was influenced, no less than the faculty of the intellect, by physical causes. He remarks that the state of the brain as to consistency was as much connected with the strength and progress of the moral faculty in children as it was with their intellectual powers; that the intellectual faculty was associated with a certain size of the brain, and a peculiar cast of features; and that the moral faculty was associated with certain qualities of figure and temperament. He observed that the moral qualities, like those of the mind, were often hereditary, and that there were as remarkable

instances of the defects of moral susceptibility as of intellectual capacity; adducing the instance of Serwin, whose character is drawn by the Duc de Lully, and in whom, with various and extraordinary mental and bodily endowments, there appeared to be a complete moral incapacity, almost every crime blending in his compound character with every accomplishment and every kind of skill. On the other hand, Dr Rush remarked, that the moral faculty might be conspicuously present, although the intellectual faculties were very feeble; and related, that he knew a man who discovered no one mark of reason, yet spent his whole life in acts of benevolence. From these views and other observations of a like kind, few observers will now be found to dissent, daily experience showing modifications of character and temper which can in no other way be explained; sometimes congenital, sometimes resulting from temporary illness or from permanent disease; industry, honesty, truthfulness, delicacy, being impaired, in some cases, as undeniably as the memory, the judgement, the speech, or the power of locomotion in others.

It has been remarked by all teachers of the

Idiot, that the simple truths of religion are more easily appreciated by their pupils than any other subject - indeed, if they fail to learn these there is little hope. Idiots, it is remarkable, have generally a knowledge of tune, which makes the teaching of singing the easiest part of their education. I have already mentioned the case of a female Idiot who occasionally leads the psalms in Chapel.

So much has been written and said of late years on this subject, that it would be quite superfluous to make longer mention of it. Various systems have been proposed and acted on, almost always with success. But no one system can succeed in every case, the teacher must modify it to suit the peculiarities of the pupil; and each and every of them would be useless without "teachers not only trained, but teachers home, full of the enthusiasm of a noble spirit, love for the objects of their care, zeal for their laborious work, patience which years of perseverance cannot quench, earnestness of manner, imperturbable temper, unbounded fertility of invention, and complete faith in the ultimate issue of their endeavours." (Kidney's on Teaching the Idiot.)

J. B. Turner