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unbroken attention, on the part of very young pupils, twice that time may safely and advantageously pass in the suggestive questions of the teacher, and the ready answers of the pupils, during the examination of a single specimen of the productions of nature. In such circumstances, instruction takes its best form,—that of interesting conversation; and time flies only too fast for both parties in the exercise. Another sustained effort of attention may, by a judicious change in the form of mental action, be as easily secured by permitting the pupil to make such attempt as he can at delineating, in detail, the parts of the object which he has been contemplating; still another may be obtained by permitting him to describe in words, and at full length, what he has observed; and even the giant Despair of "composition" may be conquered by allowing the pupil to write his description.

Such processes prepare the young student in due season, for those arduous and unflagging exertions of attention by which he ultimately succeeds in solving lengthened and complicated problems in mathematics, disentangling long and inverted sentences by tracing the grammatical relations of their parts, and following, with patient assiduity, every step in extended and abstruse processes of reasoning on subjects more purely mental in their character.

(To be continued.)
IX. ORIGIN OF THE TREATMENT AND TRAINING OF IDIOTS.

BY EDWARD SEGUN.

None but God can do anything of himself alone. Hence, the question of priority in human discovery is always contested. If the truthful history of any invention were written, we should find concerned in it the thinker, who dreams, without reaching the means of putting his imaginings in practice; the mathematician, who estimates justly the forces at command, in their relation to each other, but who forgets to proportion them to the resistance to be encountered; and, so on, through the thousand intermediates between the dream and the perfect idea, till one comes who combines the result of the labors of all his predecessors, and gives to the invention new life, and with it its name.

But, in good faith, this man is but the expression,—honorable and often honored,—of human fraternity. And, it is only from this point of view that the full benefit of the discovery is seen: being the common property of mankind, it gives us wider and deeper feelings of mutual dependence or solidarity. A short notice of the origin of the treatment and training of the unfortunate idiots will be an illustration of this law of mutual dependence.

In the year 1801, the citizen M. Bonnatre discovered, in the forest of Aveyron, France, a wild boy. This naked boy was marked with numerous scars; he was nimble as a deer, subsisting on roots and nuts, which he cracked like a monkey, laughing at the falling snow, and rolling himself with delight in this white blanket. He seemed to be about 17 years of age. Bonnatre permitted this wild boy to escape, but afterwards took him and sent him, at his own expense, to the abbé Sicard, director of the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, at Paris.

Sicard had just succeeded the illustrious abbé L'Epée; and, Bonnatre thought him to be the most suitable man to perform the miracle of which he dreamed,—the education of this creature, the most inferior that had ever been seen under the form of humanity; but, he was mistaken. Sicard exhibited, for some days, to the learned and curious, the being, who was constantly throwing away his clothes and endeavoring to escape, even by the windows; and then left him to wander, neglected, under the immense roofs of the school for deaf mutes.
But, the wild boy of Aveyron had been seen by all Paris. If the crowd of visitors had found him a subject of disgust, he excited in the mind of the thinkers and philosophers a livelier interest. Some of those who had held conversation with Franklin on the liberty of the world, were still living, and by them the subject was brought before the Academy of Sciences, where it produced interesting and fruitful discussions.

Two men were particularly conspicuous for their interest in the wild boy of Aveyron, viz.: Pinel, physician-in-chief for the insane, author of the Nosographie Philosophique, who declared the child idiotic,—the sequel proved him correct; and Itard, physician-in-chief of the deaf and dumb, who asserted that the subject was simply entirely untaught. Itard did more; he named him Victor, doubtless as a sign of the victory which education should achieve in him ever brute nature. But, he did more yet; he received him into his own house, employed a governess for him, and devoted to him a portion of his time, otherwise so fully occupied, for six years.

This devotion of Itard to this child and to science, is the more worthy of praise as, based upon a metaphysical error, his efforts were constantly met by disappointment; and yet, he never yielded to the feelings of discouragement. His errors were these: He obstinately saw in the idiot the savage; and, resting in his studies, as well as in his faith, on the materialistic doctrines of Locke and Condillac, his teachings sometimes reached the senses of his pupil, but never penetrated to his mind and soul. He gave to his senses certain notions of things, he even excited in him a physical sensibility to the caresses bestowed upon him; but, he left him destitute of ideas and of social or moral feelings, incapable of labor, and, consequently, of independence. He was, in the end of that painful and fruitless trial, immured in a hospital, where he passed the remainder of his life.

But, if these six years were almost lost to the wild boy of Aveyron, they bore their fruit in the mind of Itard. Although closely occupied in his investigations of the diseases of the ear, he often thought of the experiment of his youth, and sometimes he regretted the renown which attached itself to his name as a surgeon,—a renown that sent him patients from all parts of Europe, but left him no leisure for his philanthropic study and experiment.

It was in this state of mind that Itard, in 1837, was consulted by the celebrated Guersant, principal of the children's hospital of Paris, in the case of a young idiot. "If I was younger," cried Itard, "I would charge myself with his care; but, send me a suitable man, and
I will direct his efforts." Guersant spoke to him of myself. Itard
was a fellow student in medicine of my father. "If Seguin will
accept," Itard did me the honor of saying, "I will answer for the
result." From this sketch, it will be seen that three men took the
lead in the grand enterprise of the amelioration of the condition of
idiots: Bonnaterre, the generous and enthusiastic protector of the boy
of Aveyron; Pinel, whose discriminating diagnosis has so much
illuminated the subject of idiocy; and, Itard, whose devotion, patience,
and sagacity opened up the method of amelioration.

When Guersant offered me the perilous honor of continuing the
unfinished labor of Itard, I was just recovering from an illness,
thought at one time to be mortal. However, the desire of sending
my name to the ears of one whom I expected never to see again, gave
me strength to attempt the enterprise. Itard communicated to me
the details of what he had done with his first pupils, and I studied
all that had been attempted or performed after him.

Gall, giving a strong impulse to the investigation of the functions
of the brain, had called up the question of the cause of idiocy: a
skillful theorist, he thought he had discovered in idiots proofs of the
truth of his system of phrenology. The authors who succeeded him,
Georget, Esquirol, Lelut, Foville, Calmail, Leuret, Pritchard, seem, on
the contrary, to have studied idiocy only to use its phenomena for the
destruction of the system of Gall, but not for the benefit of the poor
idiots, whom they declared incurable. With their single polemical
object in view, they spent thirty years in measuring and weighing the
heads of living and dead idiots, and they arrived at the following
conclusions:

1. No constant relation exists between the general development of
the cranium and the degree of intelligence.
2. The dimensions of the anterior part of the cranium, and especial-
ly of the forehead, are, at least, as great among idiots as among others.
3. Three-fifths of idiots have larger heads than men of ordinary
intelligence.
4. There is no constant relation between the degree of intelligence
and the weight of the brain.
5. The different degrees of idiocy are not measurable by the weight
of the brain.
6. A cranium, perfectly formed, often encloses a brain imperfectly
formed, irregular, &c.
7. Sometimes the brain of idiots presents no deviation in form,
color, and density from the normal standard; it is, in fact, perfectly
normal.
All these anatomo-psychological facts they professed to have established;* but, of the education and treatment of idiots, not a new word was uttered during thirty-five years. At the end of that time my first labors were performed in the studio of Itard, where he bestowed on me the most valuable gift an old man can offer to a young one,—the practical result of his experience.

Itard was often sublime during these interviews, when a prey to horrible sufferings, symptoms of his fatal malady, he discussed with me the highest questions. His features would contract, and his body writhe in his anguish, but his mind never lost his clearness and precision for a moment. I there learned the secret of his influence over the idiots, as I did that of his weakness in philosophy, till the time when he died at Passy, in 1838.

The desire of knowing if mental medicine had no better remedies than his writings, for my first patients, induced me to conduct them to Esquirol, to whom we went every week. Esquirol, the oracle of the mental medicine, had nothing to teach me; but, he was a man of exquisite tact, and he gave me most excellent counsels upon the application of the processes which I suggested to him. His approbation encouraged me in my efforts, while I was maturing in my mind the theory which he never knew.

This theory, my only superiority over my predecessors, is no more separated from the men of our times, than were my early experiments from the men of the preceding generation.

The “new Christianity,” by St. Simon, the oral and written lessons of his now lamented disciple, Oliph Rodrigue; the “philosophy of history,” by president Buchez; the “encyclopædic review,” by Carnot and Charton; the “popular encyclopædia” of Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud,—my familiarity with all these, except the first,—such are the living springs whence I drew the elements of my initiation to the mysteries of the laws of philosophical medicine.

The bases of these laws are these: unity of God, manifested in his three principal attributes; unity of man in his three manifestations of being; the idiot, like other men, a likeness of God, infirm in the modes of expression of his trinity. 1st. Infirm in his mobility and sensibility. 2d. Infirm in his perception and his reasoning. 3d. Infirm in his affections and will. One and triple infirmity, reparable in the individual, as it was in the human race, for the idiot by a proper training, for mankind under the sweet, but terrible lessons which history records.

* See compendium of practical medicine, by Monneret et Fleury.
Is it not worthy of the spirit of the nineteenth century, thus to make the idiot,—this creature which, up to the present time, has been looked upon with disgust,—serve to enlighten the science of anthropology, to prove that the true theory of man’s nature is derived from a better knowledge of the Divinity, and thus to withdraw one of those veils spread between us and our Creator, called mysteries now, but which the future generations will recognize as truths.

But, it is not sufficient to have discovered the true philosophical principle; it is necessary to apply it. In this application, pure practical work, tested only by experience and comparison, all that was not historically and chronologically in its place, was recognized as false, useless, and impossible. After such an elimination of every arbitrary means of instruction and progress, the treatment of the idiot then followed the same march which the education of the human race had been pursuing during the lapse of ages. So, the first necessity of a people and of an individual, is that of an active and sensitive force, by which man is enabled to go, act, combat, and triumph. This necessity caused, for the primitive races, the introduction of athletic sports and exercises; traces of which we find even on the monuments of Thebes and Luxor. Upon these gymnastics of the primitive peoples, was founded the first steps in the education of idiots.

For those individuals who are destitute of spontaneous action, imitation was found one of the most powerful means of progress. The excitation of the imitative powers ought, then, to hold a prominent place in all the treatment, physiological, psychological, and moral. The sequel of this observation was as follows. In the physiological order, imitation, applied to gestures and gymnastics, gives to idiots attention and aptitude of the body; while, imitation, transferred from meaningless gestures to those gestures that have a private or social object, prompt to voluntary, regular action, which can produce work at any time, however it may be, simple or complex; the ability to labor is thus conquered.

It is one of the characteristics of idiocy, that it is constantly represented, in an individual, by one or more than one anomalies, in the functions of the senses, viz.: deprivation, imperfection, dullness, or exaltation. These sensorial symptoms of idiocy, so variable in their manifestations, since they affect sometimes the touch, sometimes the taste, sometimes the sense of smell, sometimes the ear, and oftener still the sight, served so well to corroborate the doctrines of the materialists of the 18th century, that Itard considered them all as constituting idiocy. In consequence, his treatment was wholly directed to the aim of repairing the disorder of the senses. The dogma of the
19th century teaches us, on the contrary, that the senses are not the mind, far less the soul; that the sensorial development is produced in the race, as it comes out in the individual, immediately after the muscular development; and that, these being accomplished, the mind and soul, the intellectual and the moral principle remain untouched. Immense revelation! since that which was regarded by the materialists as the end, is nothing more than the end of the first phase of the human trinity, and, in consequence, as the prolegomena of the treatment of idiots.

Thus it appears that the men who have given the formulas for the treatment of idiots are no less than the leading minds of the 19th century, they are those men who have rescued the science of anthropology, taking it up at the point where the Bible leaves it, making man, says the Book, "in our image after our likeness."

The senses, being in man, the doors through which the mind issues and enters, we have treated them in idiots, as in the material world, entrances oblique, too narrow, or defective in any way are treated, i. e., we have straightened or enlarged them. We have also profited, by these openings, to introduce, besides the material notions of the physical properties of bodies, a few simple ideas relating to simple and useful, or agreeable objects. These first ideas have embraced two classes of phenomena.—1st, the class of the wants, which attaches an idea of usefulness to each object; a class of unlimited extent, which gradually leads a man from the want of an artificial sole for his foot, to the research of some propulsive agency swifter than steam. 2d, the class of wonders, which offers pleasure and discovery, food to the fancy, to every one, to the savage as well as to the civilized, to the idiot as well as to the sage. Michael Montaigne calls curiosity, "that charming fury which urges us all to the incessant search after some new novelty." Idiots do not seem to possess that natural curiosity,—mother of the beautiful and of all progress—but the teacher can excite it in him.

In order to accomplish this, the idiot should receive a course of treatment similar to that which developed the primitive nations. The glorious effulgence of the light, the gloomy shadows of the darkness, the striking contrasts of colors, the infinite variety of form, the smoothness or hardness of substances, the sounds and the pauses of music, the eloquent harmonies of human gesture, look and speech, these are the powerful agents of their transition from physiological to mental education.

Away, then, with books! Give us the Assyrian and Jewish mode of instruction. The representative signs of thought where painted,
engraved, sculptured in deepness or in relief, sensible to the eye and to the touch; the tables of the mosaic laws appear in the midst of thunder and of the lightning's flash; in the same way, the symbols, under which is concealed the modern mind, should appear to the idiot, under these historic and powerful forms, so that seeing and feeling all at once, he will understand.

In most cases, speech does not exist among idiots. To teach them to speak, it is necessary to bear in mind,—1st, that the primitive languages are monosyllabic; 2d, that they have a rhythm like music; 3d, that they represent first the wants heightened to the pitch of the acutest feelings. When the idiot can speak, read, or count, to some extent, he has acquired the instruments, by the aid of which the education of the mind, already begun, is possible. Let us go on, then, in this second period of the teaching, till the heavens and earth fail to furnish us with the means of progress. The intelligence of every man has its limits; that of the mind of the idiot will be more restricted. In the foregoing task, there has been a period to teach the idiot to walk, to hold himself erect, to grasp with the hands, to carry; to act, to look, to hear, to speak, to read, and all these follow each other without confusion, like points of different perspective in a landscape; but one principle has accompanied and controlled all these successive steps—the principle of moral training.

That which most essentially constitutes idiocy, is the absence of moral volition, superseded by a negative will; that in which the treatment of an idiot essentially consist is, in changing his negative will into an affirmative one, his will of loneliness into a will of sociability and usefulness; such is the object of the moral training.

The idiot wishes for nothing, he wishes only to remain in his vacuity. To treat successfully this ill will, the physician wills that the idiot should act, and think himself, of himself, and finally by himself. The incessant volition of the moral physician urges incessantly the idiot out of his idiocy into the sphere of activity, of thinking, of labor, of duty and of affectionate feelings; such is the moral treatment. The negative will of the idiot being overcome, scope and encouragement being given to his first indications of active volition, the immoral tendencies of this new power being repressed, his mixing with the busy and living word is to be urged on at every opportunity. This moral part of the training is not something separate, but is the necessary attendant and super-addition upon all the other parts of the training, whether we teach him to read, whether we play with him the childish game, let our will govern his, if we will enough for himself, he shall become willing too.
The importance of this, the moral treatment, has led to inquire into its origin. Long before the physician had conceived the plan of correcting the false ideas and feelings of a lunatic by purgatives, or the cranial depressions of an idiot by bleeding, Spain had produced several generations of monks, who treated, with the greatest success, all kinds of mental diseases, without drugs, by moral training alone. Certain regular labors, the performance of simple and assiduous duties, an enlightened and sovereign volition, watching constantly over the patients—such were the only remedies employed. "We cure almost all of our lunatics," said the good fathers, "except the nobles, who would think themselves dishonored by working with their hands." Last and fatal word of an expiring aristocracy,—"Idleness or death," cried she, even in her insanity, and soon the people answered, "Die, then, for those alone who labor have a right to Life and Liberty."

Is it not a strange thing to contemplate!—These men, withdrawn from the world and from human science, without other knowledge than that of the Christian charity,—but in the fulness of their only and holy duty, giving to the insane, calmness in the place of fury, attention in the place of dementia, useful labor in the place of impulse to destruction; thus, in fact, driving out the demons from these wandering souls. They knew nothing, these poor monks who said to their patients—"In the name of God the creator and orderer, control thy actions.—In the name of God, the great thinker of the universe, control thy thoughts.—In the name of God, the great lover, control thy passions." These poor monks knew only to act in virtue of their faith, and we—who have with the sublime but blind faith, the reason for its exercise, we do no better than they did, only we know why and how we do it, when we apply their treatment to the idiot.

Thus, thanks to the idiots, that which was, in the hands of the monks of Spain, a divine mystery, is become a fundamental principle of anthropological science. Such is the origin, partly divine and partly human, of the treatment and education of idiots, though we can clearly see that God is at the bottom of this and of all our great discoveries.