

THE NOBLE FOREHEAD.

A paper on the "Noble Forehead" was read before the Casual Club, London, on the 1st of December, by Dr. Crochley Clapham.

The author, after dwelling upon the generally prevalent belief in the intellectual character of the noble forehead, proceeded to examine the grounds upon which this belief was founded.

He showed, by a series of photographs of the same individual taken under conditions (1) in which the hair was growing low down on the forehead, and (2) in which the hair was removed from the forehead, that in the one case the appearance was noble, and in the other ordinary. He further pointed out that the standpoint from which a forehead is viewed is of great moment in forming a judgment as to its capaciousness, and recommended Lavater's method of viewing from above.

Supposing an unusually large forehead present, he denied that it necessarily represented correspondingly large frontal lobes in the subjacent brain, and instanced the occurrence of large frontal sinuses as illustrating this. Further he contended that there was no proof that the frontal lobes were the seat of intelligence, and gave the following reasons for rather crediting the occipital lobes with that function :—

(1.) The occipital lobes occur only in the primates, being absent even in the lowest of the monkeys, whereas the frontal lobes are present in all the mammalia.

(2.) The occipital lobes, where present, are the latest developed, whereas convolutions first make their appearance in the brain of the human embryo in the frontal lobes.

(3.) The occipital lobes are not occupied, as are the frontal lobes, by extensive motor areas; indeed, they have no motor cells whatever in their cortical substance.

(4.) The occipital lobes are small and ill-developed in idiots (a straight back to the head being a common feature of idiocy), whilst the frontal lobes are unusually large, relatively speaking.

(5.) Wasting of the occipital lobes is always accompanied by dementia; not so wasting of the frontal lobes.

In support of his fourth proposition, the author quoted from some tables in his possession which he had drawn from careful weighings, made by him and others in the West Riding Asylum, of over 400 insane brains. Idiots' brains had frontal lobes weighing 37·16 per cent. of the weight of the whole encephalon, whilst all male cases only showed a percentage of 36·05, and all cases, male and female, a percentage of only 35·99. In fact, with the single exception of cases of simple mania, where the percentage of the frontals to the encephalon was 37·31, idiocy ranked highest in the scale.

As regards measurements of the head, the author quoted from a paper of his in the sixth vol. of the West Riding Asylum Med. Reports, to show that in a number of sane and insane individuals of the same station in life, whose heads were measured, the frontal portion of the circumference was 52·5 per cent. of the whole circumference in the insane, whereas it was only 52·1 per cent. in the sane.

For the benevolent character of the noble forehead, the author thought that more might be said, and he gave a table in which the head measurements of 84 respectable members of society were compared with those of 500 criminals, taken by Dr. Henry Clarke in the West Riding Prison. The comparison showed that the respectable members of society had a frontal percentage of 52·1, whilst the criminals had a frontal percentage of 48·6 only. The author, after pointing out how careful we must be in drawing conclusions from such com-

parisons, went on to illustrate by diagrams the great want of correspondence which existed between the shape of the head and the shape of the brain, and finished up his paper with an attack on the so-called science of Phrenology, and the modes of procedure adopted by its professors.

An interesting debate followed, in which Mr. Kingsford, Dr. Selve Bennett, Mr. Boyes, Drs. Hack Tuke, Huggard, Savage, Hughes Bennett, &c., took part.

SHOULD THE COST OF MAINTENANCE OF PAUPER ASYLUMS BE BORNE BY THE STATE OR BY LOCAL TAXATION?

We observe that the following resolution, proposed by Mr. Pell and seconded by Mr. Ellis, was adopted at a meeting of the Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Chamber of Agriculture, Nov. 12, 1881 :—

“That the charges paid out of the local rates for the support of pauper lunatic asylums be defrayed from Imperial funds.”

It is proposed to hold a County Meeting on this and kindred questions.

We believe that the County Magistrates of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely have both passed formal resolutions at their respective sessions, declaring it desirable that the Government should take up the asylums as they have already done the cost of the police. In South Leicestershire they have pursued the same course.

The correspondent of the “Derbyshire Times” of Nov. 5, observes, when speaking of this action, “There can be no doubt that this is a very important resolution, and one which will probably extend to and be discussed in other counties, especially as the Government last Session promised to take up and deal with the subject of Lunacy and Lunatic Asylums. Considering present circumstances, and the prospects of County Boards, which mean chiefly *Guardians*, having the management of Pauper Asylums, there is every disposition to believe that the balance of advantage would be decidedly in favour of the Cambridge resolution, although State control might not be an unmixed blessing. It will, however, be an evil day for the Insane Poor when their interests are handed over to ‘Guardians,’ who would probably form the largest proportion of Pauper Lunatic Asylum Committees. Far better to exclude Asylums altogether from the operation of any County Boards Bill rather than take a retrograde step by placing Pauper Asylums under the control of County Boards and Guardians. Let these Institutions be under State Control, under the Home Secretary, like the Prisons, or under the Local Government Board, which has the charge of Paupers. The advantages of State Control are obvious. There would be greater concentration, *e.g.*, one Asylum instead of two, as proposed in Derbyshire, less loss and distribution of energy and material, and more facility of administration, with, in all probability, less cost in management. The resources of Pauper Asylums would be made more largely available for recent, urgent, and violent cases; these institutions would be utilised to a greater extent; and the Idiots and Imbeciles, instead of being scattered over various Workhouses (as in Derbyshire), might be concentrated in one Intermediate Asylum, or disused Workhouse, set apart for the purpose. This was pointed out by Mr. Pell, M.P., the other day [at the Poor Law Conference at Derby. The feeling of that meeting was in favour of concentration, Mr. Pell’s motion being passed unanimously.

“I am not to be understood as objecting to, or calling in question, the management of County Justices of Pauper Asylums. On the contrary, I believe that the poor insane will never be better or more humanely and liberally treated than under the present system. But as it is evident that, in response