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ON THE

STUDY OF CHARACTER,

INCLUDING

An Estimate of Phrenology.

BY

ALEXANDER BAIN, A.M.

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

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LONDON:

PARKER, SON, AND BOURN, WEST STRAND.

1861.

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LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

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PREFACE.

THE present work is intended, if possible, to reanimate the interest in the analytical study of human character, which was considerably awakened by the attention drawn to phrenology, and which seems to have declined with the comparative neglect of that study at the present time. There is nothing more certain, than that the discriminating knowledge of individual character is a primary condition of much of the social improvement that the present age is panting for. The getting the right man into the right place is mainly a problem of the judgment of character; the mere wish to promote the fitting person is nugatory in the absence of the discrimination.

Our further progress in the knowledge of character must proceed in great part from more searching inquiries into the human mind. Phrenology, notwithstanding its onesidedness, has done good service, by showing with more emphasis than had ever been done before, that human beings are widely different in their mental tastes and aptitudes, and by affording a scheme for representing and classifying the points of character, which is in many respects an improvement upon the common mode of describing individual differences. But neither this scheme nor any other, can be set up as finality on so difficult a subject; and it is to be wished that a certain portion of the scientific intellect of our generation would devote itself to the pro-

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motion of a branch of knowledge that concerns our welfare no less than astronomy, geology, or mechanics.

The course here pursued is, first, to give a critical examination of Phrenology, as being the only System of Character hitherto elaborated, and then to lay out the subject according to the plan deemed on the whole the best. This double treatment has many advantages to compensate for the want of outward symmetry. The Phrenological partition of the mind, if not accepted by all philosophers, is well known to the general public; hence any observations, tending either to confirm or to impugn it, have a chance of being readily understood. When a subject is either very extensive from the multitude of its details, or very profound from the subtlety of its principles, nothing does more for clearness than to approach it from various points of view. A system, inferior on the whole, may still bring out some portions of the subject to peculiar advantage. It requires a great and marked superiority in the latest development of any science, to dispense entirely with the consideration of the prior modes of arrangement.

The occasional repetitions that occur under the present scheme will, I think, be found principally on topics requiring an expanded illustration, whether given in one place, or in more than one.

The criticism on Phrenology, occupying about half the volume, has already appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*.

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