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ON THE

STUDY OF CHARACTER,

INCLUDING

An Estimate of Phrenology.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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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-

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*.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THEORIES OF CHARACTER.

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Characters of Theophrastus . . . . .                           | 1    |
| La Bruyère . . . . .   | 5    |
| Charles Fourier's classification of characters . . . . .       | 8    |
| Samuel Bailey on the Science of Individual Character . . . . . | 10   |
| John Stuart Mill on Ethology . . . . .                         | 13   |

### CHAPTER II.

#### CLAIMS OF PHRENOLOGY.

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Combe's criticism of previous metaphysical philosophers . . . . .   | 12         |
| Phrenology drew attention to the connexion of mind and material organs . . . . .                                      | 16         |
| Facts in support of this doctrine . . . . .   | 17         |
| Connexion of mental power with size of brain . . . . .  | 19         |
| Phrenological doctrine of a plurality of distinct cerebral organs, in connexion with distinct mental powers . . . . . | 22         |
| Application of this to found a science of CHARACTER . . . . .   | 24         |
| Pretensions to supersede the previous systems of the MIND . . . . .   | 25         |
| Samuel Bailey on the exact bearing of the phrenological positions on our knowledge of the mind . . . . .              | <i>ib.</i> |
| Province of the Science of Mind . . . . .   | 29         |
| Not superseded, but pre-supposed, by a Science of Character . . . . .   | 30         |
| The Phrenological method . . . . .  | 31         |
| The effects of Size of brain modified by Temperament . . . . .  | <i>ib.</i> |
| Doctrine of Temperaments an ancient and clumsy device . . . . .   | 32         |

|  | PAGE       |
|--|------------|
| Preferable plan, an examination of the Bodily Organs, <i>seriatim</i> . . . . .              | 33         |
| Varieties of quality exhibited by the Nerve Substance . . . . .                              | 34         |
| Tests of a good quality of Nerve . . . . .   | 36         |
| Organs of the Senses . . . . .   | 39         |
| The Muscles. Mental consequences of a high muscular endowment . . . . .                      | 40         |
| The Digestion. Its great importance to the mind . . . . .                                    | 41         |
| The Lungs and Respiration . . . . .  | <i>ib.</i> |
| The Heart and Circulation . . . . .  | <i>ib.</i> |
| Temperaments resulting from the comparative vigour of the several organs . . . . .           | 42         |
| Phrenological Divisions of the Mind . . . . .  | <i>ib.</i> |
| The Propensities and Sentiments not fundamentally distinct classes . . . . .                 | 44         |
| The true contrast lies between Natural Energy and the various Feelings or Emotions . . . . . | 45         |
| The Intellectual Faculties include pure Emotions . . . . .                                   | 47         |

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PROPENSITIES ACCORDING TO PHRENOLOGY.

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| An ultimate analysis of the mind a necessary pre-requisite of the phrenological scheme . . . . . | 48         |
| Criteria of a primitive faculty . . . . .  | 49         |
| Bailey's conditions of an Organology of the Brain . . . . .                                      | 50         |
| THE PROPENSITIES . . . . .   | <i>ib.</i> |
| 1. <i>Amativeness</i> . . . . .  | 51         |
| Amativeness implies both an actual and an ideal state . . . . .                                  | 53         |
| A large cerebral organ would lead to ideal continuance of the feeling . . . . .                  | 54         |
| Proofs offered for the connexion of Amativeness with the cerebellum . . . . .                    | 55         |
| Insufficiency of those proofs . . . . .  | 58         |
| How are we to deal with the observed coincidences ? . . . . .                                    | 60         |
| 2. <i>Philoprogenitiveness</i> . . . . .   | 61         |
| Feelings that enter into parental love apart from a special source . . . . .                     | 62         |
| A peculiar <i>maternal</i> feeling not improbable . . . . .                                      | 65         |
| Departures from the proper meaning of the sentiment . . . . .                                    | <i>ib.</i> |

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 3. <i>Concentrativeness</i> . Properly a phase of our Active nature . . . . .                      | 66   |
| 4. <i>Adhesiveness</i> . Only a mode of Tender Feeling . . . . .                                   | 67   |
| Elements of the disposition to Sociability . . . . .   | 68   |
| 5. <i>Combativeness</i> . Mr. Cox's definition 'the tendency to oppose' . . . . .                  | 72   |
| Can the love of opposing be explained without a separate instinct? . . . . .                       | 73   |
| Combativeness implies the possession of a weapon together with a stimulation from within . . . . . | 74   |
| Great constitutional activity is therefore implied . . . . .                                       | 76   |
| Also the Sentiment of Power . . . . .  | 77   |
| 6. <i>Destructiveness</i> . The same as the Irascible Emotion . . . . .                            | 79   |
| Explanation of the pleasure of Malevolence . . . . .   | 80   |
| 6A. <i>Alimentiveness</i> . Probably a distinct feeling of the mind . . . . .                      | 81   |
| 7. <i>Secretiveness</i> . Referable to known motives . . . . .                                     | 82   |
| 8. <i>Acquisitiveness</i> . The desire of Property . . . . .                                       | 84   |
| The advantages of Wealth sufficient to account for its pursuit . . . . .                           | 85   |
| 9. <i>Constructiveness</i> . In the final analysis a peculiarity of the Muscular System . . . . .  | 87   |

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SENTIMENTS ACCORDING TO PHRENOLOGY.

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| The Sentiments under Phrenology compared with the Emotions under the Metaphysicians . . . . . | 89         |
| 10. <i>Self-esteem</i> . Includes sentiments distinct in their origin . . . . .               | 90         |
| Self-complacency, its analysis . . . . .  | <i>ib.</i> |
| Self-esteem implied under Self-complacency . . . . .  | 92         |
| Self-love and Selfishness different from the foregoing . . . . .                              | 93         |
| The Love of Power also distinct. Some of its forms . . . . .                                  | 94         |
| 11. <i>Love of Approbation</i> . Antithesis of Pride and Vanity . . . . .                     | 97         |
| Self-sufficingness contrasted with dependence on the opinion of others . . . . .              | 98         |
| 12. <i>Cautiousness</i> . Criticism of Mr. Bailey . . . . .                                   | 100        |
| Analysis of Fear. How allied with Circumspection . . . . .                                    | 103        |
| Prudence. Special mode of being alive to the signs of other men's feelings . . . . .          | 105        |

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 13. <i>Benevolence.</i> Goodness of heart an innate quality . . . . .                            | 107  |
| Adhesiveness and Benevolence not fundamentally different . . . . .                               | 108  |
| Benevolence a form of Tender Emotion . . . . .   | 109  |
| Depends for its range on our capability of sympathy . . . . .                                    | 110  |
| Self-pity . . . . .  | 111  |
| 14. <i>Veneration.</i> The Religious Sentiment resolvable into other elements . . . . .          | 112  |
| The peculiar element is the feeling aroused by the aspect of power . . . . .                     | 113  |
| Various forms of the sentiment of veneration . . . . .   | 114  |
| 15. <i>Firmness.</i> Not the same as Will or Volition . . . . .                                  | 116  |
| Energy must be coupled with some directing influence . . . . .                                   | 119  |
| The memory of past pains and pleasures necessary to firmness . . . . .                           | 120  |
| The peculiarity is therefore intellectual . . . . .  | 122  |
| 16. <i>Conscientiousness.</i> Combe on the Moral Theories . . . . .                              | 123  |
| The conscientious man fulfils the expectations of the society he lives in . . . . .              | 124  |
| Sympathy an essential of conscience . . . . .  | 126  |
| Conscience sometimes rises above the standards of the time . . . . .                             | 127  |
| 17. <i>Hope.</i> A secondary effect, taken for the primary . . . . .                             | ib.  |
| The hopeful temper a consequence of the happy temper . . . . .                                   | 128  |
| The happy and sanguine disposition may arise from temperament . . . . .                          | 130  |
| 18. <i>Wonder</i> . . . . .  | 132  |
| 19. <i>Ideality.</i> Gall allocated an organ to poets . . . . .                                  | 133  |
| Confusion of Spurzheim's definition of Ideality . . . . .  | 134  |
| The susceptibility to Beauty or Fine Art the thing intended . . . . .                            | 135  |
| Fine Art emotions a numerous group . . . . .   | 137  |
| Distinction between Sensibility and Productive power . . . . .                                   | 138  |
| 20. <i>Wit, or Mirthfulness.</i> Character of the emotion of the ludicrous not settled . . . . . | 140  |
| Combe's illustrations . . . . .  | 142  |
| 21. <i>Imitation.</i> The talent for the stage . . . . .   | 143  |

## CHAPTER V.

## THE INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES ACCORDING TO PHRENOLOGY.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Subdivision of the Intellectual Faculties . . . . .   | 146  |
| 23. <i>Form.</i> Designated by Gall as the faculty of the knowledge of persons . . . . .                  | 147  |
| Means <i>visible</i> form, and is the muscular sense of the eye . . . . .                                 | 148  |
| 24. <i>Size.</i> Form and Size erroneously treated as distinct faculties . . . . .                        | ib.  |
| 25. <i>Weight.</i> The organ of mechanical aptitude . . . . .   | 150  |
| Identity of meaning of Weight and Constructiveness . . . . .  | 152  |
| Improbability of the allocation of the organ . . . . .  | 153  |
| 26. <i>Colouring.</i> The pleasure in, and discrimination of, colours . . . . .                           | ib.  |
| The true optical sensibility of the sense of sight . . . . .  | 155  |
| 27. <i>Locality.</i> The facility of remembering places . . . . .   | ib.  |
| An application of Form and Colour, directed by local interest . . . . .                                   | 156  |
| 28. <i>Number.</i> The aptitude for Arithmetic and Algebra . . . . .                                      | ib.  |
| Not an ultimate faculty of the mind . . . . .   | 157  |
| 29. <i>Order.</i> As an ultimate susceptibility, can only mean the Sense of Symmetry to the eye . . . . . | ib.  |
| 30. <i>Eventuality.</i> Takes cognisance of movements, or action . . . . .                                | 158  |
| Indicates rather a weak susceptibility to Colour and Form, made up by the stimulant of motion . . . . .   | 159  |
| 31. <i>Time.</i> Incongruity of the functions ascribed to the faculty . . . . .                           | 160  |
| The sense of time probably a muscular discrimination . . . . .  | 161  |
| 32. <i>Tune.</i> The musical faculty . . . . .  | ib.  |
| 33. <i>Language.</i> The organ that first suggested phrenology to Gall . . . . .                          | 162  |
| Different powers implied under a command of language . . . . .  | 164  |
| 22. <i>Individuality.</i> Properly the organ of Observation and Detail . . . . .                          | 165  |
| Antithesis of observation and generalization . . . . .  | 166  |
| Individuality already implied in the other observing faculties . . . . .                                  | 168  |