

On human responsibility, as affected by phrenology.

Contributors

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ON

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY,

AS AFFECTED BY

PHRENOLOGY.

Extract from Minute of the Phrenological Society, dated 2d February, 1826.—

“ The Society having heard an ‘ Essay on Human Responsibility, as affected by Phrenology,’ by Mr Combe, unanimously return him thanks for the communication; request him to print and circulate the paper, and adjourn the consideration of it till next meeting, on Thursday evening, 16th February, at eight o’clock.”

IN the Essays on Phrenology, published in 1819, I adopted from Dr Spurzheim the doctrine of Free Will, and of Responsibility founded on it. Objections were stated to this view which I could not remove: At the same time, it was obvious, that if Necessity were demonstrable by argument, Responsibility was certain as a *fact*; and how to reconcile them, was a problem which for years I was unable to solve. On this account I omitted the subject of Will and Responsibility in all my subsequent publications. At last some ideas have occurred which promise to remove a few of the difficulties, and I now venture to present them to the Society for their consideration. Dr Spurzheim’s late excellent work on the “ Philosophical Principles of Phrenology”

has greatly aided me in arriving at the views now to be unfolded.

The first object in an investigation of this nature is to obtain a clear conception of what Will and Responsibility truly are.

To discover the origin and nature of Will, we may take a few familiar examples. A person having received from nature a large organ of Tune, it may become involuntarily active, and he may have the desire to gratify the faculty by making music; but it may happen that the time is mid-day, the place the hall of a court of justice, and a prisoner on trial for a crime involving death. When the desire is felt, Veneration may inspire with reverence for the situation and place, Benevolence with compassion for the culprit, and Conscientiousness re-enforcing their dictates, may all give desires to preserve decorum, and a becoming gravity of deportment. The intellect being directed to the desire and opposing emotions, perceives that the latter are the higher motives, and decides that music shall not be made. In this instance, Tune gives one desire,—Veneration, Love of Approbation, Benevolence, and Conscientiousness, give opposite desires, namely, to preserve decorum, and respect the feelings of the criminal and court, and intellect combining with the latter, produces the will to do so. Here, then, Will is the decision of the intellect on contending inclinations.

But suppose again that the day is Saturday, the hour evening, and the place a drawing-room, brilliant with beauty, and resplendent with the finest productions of art,—if Tune there becomes involuntarily active,—no opposing sentiments arise to check it, but, on the contrary, all conspire to sanction its gratification, and the intellect surveying this state of the feelings yields its accord, and the individual *wills* to play.

One great point to which I wish to solicit your attention is, that the desire to make music, which becomes Will when

the intellect acquiesces in its gratification, arises from the activity of Tune in a certain available degree. If it had been so small and inactive as never to give the inward desire for music, and music had never been heard, the intellect by no efforts could have willed to play. The faculties of Causality and Comparison could no more have conceived what music is, or been animated with the desire to produce it, than they could conceive sound without the aid of the auditory apparatus. In like manner, in the first case supposed, where Tune was checked in its gratification, there was desire also, namely, to observe the proprieties of the place; and the will to refrain was in that instance as clearly preceded by desire to pay deference to the court, as the will to play was preceded by the desire to make music in the other case.

Let us take another example, and suppose that in an individual Acquisitiveness is very active, and it gives the desire to steal, but that Conscientiousness, Veneration, Benevolence, and Cautiousness, are also powerful, and give the desire to observe justice,—reflection, acting on the opposite desires, decides in favour of the higher, and the hands refrain from stealing.

But, if you imagine Conscientiousness, Veneration, Benevolence, and Cautiousness, all to be very deficient, then the desire to do justice and love mercy will arise very feebly in the mind, while Acquisitiveness will give a powerful solicitation to steal, and the intellect may then yield to the inferior desire through mere deficiency in the opposite feelings. In this case, also, Comparison and Causality are limited to tracing cause and effect. However disastrous the consequences may appear, yet, without adequate Cautiousness, fear of them cannot be felt, nor the desire of justice without adequate Conscientiousness, nor reverence for the Divine law without Veneration, nor charity for man without Benevolence. Nay, unless the desires given by the restraining faculties be stronger than those produced by the propensities

soliciting to sin, I do not see how the restraint can possibly take place. In the case of Bellingham, for example, it appears to me that the desire of revenge, springing from excessively excited Destructiveness and Self-esteem, must have decidedly preponderated over the desire to spare the life of Mr Perceval, founded on Benevolence and Conscientiousness, otherwise he could not have murdered that individual. The same principle is illustrated in an anecdote narrated by Denon, of two soldiers in the army which invaded Egypt under Napoleon Buonaparte.—“ The inhabitants of this part of the
 “ continent retired to it on our approach, abandoning the large vil-
 “ lage of Binban, which skirts the desert, and the appearance of
 “ which is equally gloomy. We arrived here after marching eleven
 “ hours; the drove of oxen which followed us had gone astray, and
 “ we had to wait for it, with the constant fear of its being carried off.
 “ The village contained nothing but a few walls, which we searched,
 “ even to their foundation. A scene here occurred, that presented
 “ a striking contrast of savage brutality and the kindest sensibility.
 “ I was making the remark, that necessity was as ingenious in
 “ bringing treasure to light as the care of the natives had been to
 “ conceal it, when a soldier came from a cellar, dragging after him
 “ a she-goat which he had discovered; he was followed by an old
 “ man, carrying two young infants; these he placed on the ground,
 “ fell on his knees, and, without speaking a word, pointed, with
 “ tears in his eyes, to the young children, who would perish if the goat
 “ were taken away; but want, which is deaf and blind to the af-
 “ fliction of others, was not affected by this distressing scene, and
 “ the goat was killed. At the same moment another soldier arriv-
 “ ed, also holding in his arms a child, whose mother doubtless had
 “ been obliged to desert it in her flight; this brave fellow, notwith-
 “ standing the weight of his musket, his cartridges, his knapsack,
 “ and the fatigue of four days’ forced marches, had picked up this
 “ little forsaken creature, had carried it carefully for two leagues
 “ in his arms; but not knowing what to do with it in a deserted
 “ village, and seeing one inhabitant left behind with two children,
 “ he gently put down his little charge beside them, and departed
 “ with the delightful sensation of one who has just performed a
 “ benevolent action.”* Unless, in the one of these men, the desire to preserve the life of the child had been stronger than the desire to gratify his more selfish feelings, and the reverse had been the case in the other, they could not have acted as they did.

* Denon’s Travels in Egypt, vol. i. p. 336.

Now, if desire must always precede will, it becomes of importance next to ascertain whence desire proceeds. Every faculty being active, gives desire for its own gratification, and the intensity of the desire is in proportion to the size and activity of the organ. Here, then, natural development of brain is the grand source of desire.

But, in the second place, the faculties are all liable to be excited by the presentment of their natural objects; and, by the influence of external circumstances, desire may be strongly elicited or greatly suppressed. For example, the organ of Veneration may be by no means deficient in the head of a member of this Society; but if I were at this moment to walk forth, and offer him a gross and unprovoked insult before this audience, it is highly probable that the excitement given by this most unexpected attack might so arouse Combativeness and Destructiveness, that he would level me on the floor, quite regardless of the dignity of the chair and the respect due to the individuals around him. Reverse the circumstances again, and suppose that at the moment when the insult was offered, some august personage, or dearly-beloved and long-absent friend, unexpectedly entered the hall, and that his eye, kindling with wrath, caught the expression of their countenance, beaming with benignant condescension, or brightened with the smiles of love and a long-cherished affection, it is quite possible that these objects, addressed to the powerful faculties of Veneration, Adhesiveness, and Benevolence, which we know our member to possess, might arouse a different class of faculties in his mind, and produce the desire to forego the infliction of vengeance upon me, and to enjoy the higher gratifications of respect to the august stranger, or kind recognizance of his beloved friend. But here also his conduct would proceed from the predominant faculties; and we may safely say, that, possessing the precise powers, and placed in the precise circumstances supposed, he could not have experienced any feelings but those which he actually felt, and could not have desired differently from his

actual desires, could not have willed differently, and could not have acted differently than he did.

Here, then, in the natural activity of the faculties, and in the influence of external circumstances in exciting them, we have all the elements which produce desire, and which, when sanctioned by intellect, constitute Will. The intellectual faculties themselves also give desires; for example, if Causality is very active, I may have a strong desire to write a metaphysical essay; and if no other faculty opposes, I shall certainly do so. But if Conscientiousness intimate that I ought rather to attend to more urgent business, then Causality weighing its own desire, along with the desire of Conscientiousness to do justice, re-enforced as it would be by Benevolence and other moral faculties, would undoubtedly go off as it were with the latter, and aid them in attaining gratification. If Conscientiousness, however, were the weaker desire, then I fear Causality would not go with it, but seek its own satisfaction.

Even when a criminal walks to execution, he is obeying the strongest motive. If we analyze his mental state, he has two alternatives presented to him. His intellect perceives that death is inevitable, and that if he does not walk, he will be carried to the scaffold, be lifted up to the fatal beam by physical force, and hanged like a dog;—the other alternative is to put forth a manly fortitude, and submit to his fate with becoming resignation. Now, suppose that by his crime the unhappy victim has become an object of hatred to his fellow-men, he will still feel, by means of his Self-esteem, that, by choosing the first alternative, he will add contempt to their disapprobation; while, by the second, he may excite their sympathy, and bespeak at least some portion of respect. Look at the large Self-esteem and Firmness of John Thurtell, and imagine him surrounded by the associates of his gayest hours, and looked upon, through the press, by the eyes of all Britain, how immeasurably would the pain and the disgrace, even of execution, have been aggravated by the feel-

ing, that abject contempt for his cowardice and deficiency of manly spirit would be added to all the detestation of his crimes ! The will of Thurtell, therefore, and of every criminal who displays a becoming fortitude at the awful moment of death, is determined, by the predominating desire, namely, the desire of death, with some portion of sympathy and respect, in preference to death, with pure contempt and unmitigated detestation from his fellow-men. I do not suppose that his desire of life is not strong even in all the desperation of his circumstances, but I have said that, to produce Will, the intellect must coincide with the desire, and assist it to attain its object. In the condition of the criminal, however, intellect cannot go along with this desire. We may suppose the intellect to have anxiously seconded it in preparing for defence on the trial, in petitioning for mercy after condemnation, in surveying the prison walls, the prison doors, and the circumspection of the jailor, with the view of escape, and all the time there would be the will to live, because in these efforts the desire and intellect would act together ; but when pardon has been refused, the jail been found to be too strong, the keepers too vigilant, and when the hour of execution arrives, and the guards attend, and all the mournful apparatus of death is presented to the eyes, the intellect at last, by the very laws of its constitution, is compelled to yield, it sees that fulfilment of the desire is impossible ; the outward circumstances excite a new desire, that of dying with fortitude, and the intellect, approving and seconding it, makes the legs move, and carries the person through the awful ceremony of death.

According to these views, then, human actions are the consequences of Will, and Will is the result of the strongest desire sanctioned by intellect, and desires arise from the activity of the faculties, and this activity springs from either internal or external excitement. This view of Will explains one circumstance which has puzzled philosophers, moralists,

and divines. So far as I have yet gone, I am accompanied by the profoundest metaphysicians and most orthodox divines. Jonathan Edwards has demonstrated the doctrine now advanced, and I understand it to be admitted by Christian churches in general, and also by the Mahometan and Hindu religions. But often have I heard this observation from highly intelligent and enlightened scholars and Christians.—“Philosophy proves, by demonstration, the predominance of motives, and the conclusion of moral necessity is inevitable; nevertheless it is every moment refuted by Consciousness; for we have the irresistible conviction that we are free;—we feel that our will is free, and this refutes and sets our philosophy at nought.” Now, this opposition between the results of philosophy and the testimony of Consciousness is apparent only, and not real. No one ever disputed, that, in general, we have the power of acting according to the Will; that if I will to walk or to sit down, I can do so, if my limbs are sound and physical restraint absent; but the difficulty is, whether I can will to walk or to sit, except from a desire arising in me of itself, or being excited by an outward object; and the doctrine which I am now endeavouring to explain holds that I cannot. Imagine, then, that some gentleman wished to try whether I was a free agent, and that he, altogether unknown to me, were to delay entering the hall till this moment, and were now to present himself at the door, and with a countenance expressive of deep alarm and commiseration, were to announce that a chimney stalk has fallen down in my house, and killed the dearest objects of my affections, would not this intimation instantly excite Adhesiveness, Benevolence, and other sympathetic faculties, and produce the desire to fly to the scene of so great a calamity? and would not intellect aid these feelings with its guiding powers? and would not I instantly hasten away? Suppose, farther, the gentleman who devised the experiment were to stop me at the door, and tell that the calamity was all an invention of his own, I would then stay. Let us survey the occurrence in two points of

view. First, If I look into my own mind, I would say that in going and staying I was perfectly free; that is, the desire to go was violently excited, intellect approved, and off I went: then the desire to go was removed, the desire to stay re-appeared, intellect saw the propriety of this new desire, approved of it, and I returned. Could any thing be freer than this? Here, however, you will observe the feeling of freedom arises entirely from the existence of the desire; and as desire is in every case the foundation and precedent of Will, it is impossible, from the nature of things, that we can ever feel the Will otherwise than as free. But let the phenomena be now surveyed by the gentleman who devised the experiment. He saw that nature had implanted Adhesiveness and Benevolence, &c. in my mind; he knew that these desired the welfare of my relatives; he knew the motives which detained me here, the desire of reading this essay, and hearing the observations on it of my friends, and he knew that, if he could, by presenting objects to Adhesiveness and Benevolence, rouse these faculties to give desires more vehement than the desires which kept me here, I would undoubtedly run; and accordingly, by touching the spring, the internal machinery was set agoing, and I freely, so far as my desire was concerned, but necessarily so far as my desire arose from my constitution, would unquestionably fly to the door. Dr Spurzheim has given a forcible illustration of this same point. Suppose, says he, that an animal had only one desire, to fly to the north, with intellect sufficient to discover the points of the compass, that it were permitted to ascend the air, and that, on arriving above the mountains' summit, it were allowed to dart off to the north with all the energy communicated by intense desire, and the vigour of a powerful wing, it would have the feeling that it was the freest animal in creation. It would feel an overpowering passion for the north, and while it looked east, west, and south, and felt that it could set all their attractions and solicitations at defiance, and speed its way with vehement flight

in its favourite direction, it would naturally exult in the very exuberance of its liberty; yet every other creature who had penetration enough to discover that it received its desire from its natural constitution, and that it had no other desire, would perceive it to be in the highest degree a necessary agent.

So much then for Free-will. I come now to inquire into the doctrine of Responsibility. It is generally imagined that without Free-will there can be no Responsibility. This appears to me a fundamental error; and Responsibility in this world, for I do not speak of the next, seems to arise from the relation of cause and effect, or of necessary consequence established by the Creator among his works, and to have no other foundation. For example, the object of the Creator, in forming the human body, was, that it should live, enjoy health, and minister to the gratification of the mind, and, after a time, decay by insensible degrees and die. To attain these ends he placed it in certain relations to the physical objects around it. For instance, fire would consume the body; and, to prevent this catastrophe, he made it exceedingly painful to be burned. By making it so he, in effect, issued the command, "Thou shalt not place thy body in the fire," and added the pain, as the sanction of the law. Now, suppose that through mere accident, or even by the designing violence of ferocious men, our hand is thrust into the flames, the law is not in the least relaxed on account of the entire impossibility in the sufferer to avoid the breach of it; his hand is burned, and all the pains felt. In surveying this result, we ought to look at the intention of the Creator in instituting the law and its sanction. The human body is combustible, and if it had not been painful to be burned, no powerful motive would have existed to induce us to avoid this source of danger and destruction. In the inevitable pain, therefore, suffered in infringing this relation, you see the guarantee which preserves the lives of your children and yourselves in numberless instances, causes us to build up

grates, remove fire from wood, and take all the precautions, on the observing of which fire becomes our most useful servant, but on neglecting which it becomes our consuming devourer. Here then is a physical law, attended with very high Responsibility, without the least regard to the freedom of the Will in infringing it. I call this Physical Responsibility, and you will understand what I mean by physical freedom when contrasted with it. Imagine that, by a fiat of the Will, we could subvert the relations established by the Creator between our own bodies and external objects, and set up different relations at our pleasure; imagine that I could walk into the fire and not be burned, although he had decreed the opposite; that I could dive into the water and not be drowned; nay, that I could now, in spite of the laws of gravitation, which chain my body to the earth, by a mere wish, ascend through the ceiling of this hall, an impalpable essence, and at one shoot, cast my body into the moon; this would be physical freedom; for here I would be commanding the result of my conduct, and subverting all the consequences flowing from the relations established by the Creator. Imagine for a moment, that this sort of freedom were bestowed on man, what would become of the regularity of action, of the attractions of country, kindred, and occupations? where would each of us be found, or by what principle would the train of events be regulated? It is obvious that the most utter and unmitigated confusion and absurdity would everywhere reign, and that the race, in short, would very speedily become extinct. The most strict Responsibility to the physical laws of creation is then the greatest blessing to man; and I observe farther, that so rigid is the Creator in enforcing it, that even ignorance of the law does not exempt from its consequences. If a child eats arsenic instead of sugar, it acts in defiance of a relation established by the Creator between the human body and this physical substance, whereby the arsenic decomposes the organs of digestion; but all-innocent as the child is, and unhappy as are the consequences,

there is no relenting ; pain and death must ensue unless the arsenic is removed, or its influence counteracted by other physical agents standing in a more friendly relation to the stomach. If we contemplate only the individual sufferer, there is here an appearance of severity and harsh injustice, or deficiency in Benevolence ; but if you look a little wider, and survey the consequences of even a partial inattention to the relation of that substance to the human body, and the multiplied deaths and numberless agonies that would thereby ensue, there is the most decided benevolence to the race in making the law thus rigid and inflexible, and the mind of a parent, who was sufficiently elevated in philosophic piety and Christian resignation would bow before the majesty of God, kiss the rod, and acknowledge the mercy of the institution even while weeping over the dead body of a darling infant that had fallen a victim to an unfortunate neglect of the relation. In the severity of the penalty he would recognise the guarantee of the safety of his other children, and of those of countless millions besides ; for every fresh accident tightens the cords of vigilance to keep such substances away from children in future.

Let us now advert to Moral Responsibility, and see whether it be more dependent on the freedom of the will. I divide Responsibility into internal and external. *First*, as to Internal Responsibility ; here we must look to the three orders of faculties, propensities, sentiments, and intellect, and keep in mind the relations which the Creator has established among them. In consequence of the nature of the several faculties, and the relations established between them, every abuse of the propensities excites a painful and condemnatory emotion in the moral sentiments, and the intensity of this painful emotion is in proportion to the size and activity of the organs of the sentiments compared with those of the propensities. David Haggart, for example, under the influence of the desire of life, abused Combativeness and Destructiveness so as murder the jailor of Dumfries. Attend then to the effect

which this action produced on his faculty of Benevolence, the organ of which is large:—"When," says he, "the boy answered, 'No; but the jailor died 'last night at ten o'clock,' his words struck me to the soul; my heart died within me, and I was insensible for a good while; on coming to myself I could scarcely believe I had heard them, for the possibility of poor Morren's death had never entered into my mind." Contrast this effect with the emotion experienced by John Bellingham on surveying the murder of Mr Perceval; he sat calmly by the fire, pleased with his exploit; and the organ of Benevolence is exceedingly deficient in his head. Haggart stole also as well as murdered. This is chiefly in opposition to Conscientiousness; but this organ is very deficient in his head; and in his Life he speaks with manifest complacency of his thefts. Suppose, on the other hand, that one of our respected members were, by any extraordinary external excitement, to be tempted to steal, and that in him Conscientiousness, Veneration, and Benevolence, are all large:—after the external cause which roused his Acquisitiveness to abuse had been removed, and these moral organs had fairly given their determinations, woe would then be to our friend, for loud and bitter would be their reproaches. All this, however, you will observe, arises from the natural functions of the faculties, and the relations established between them, and has no reference to the question, From what cause the abuse of Acquisitiveness arose? The moral law is as unbending as the physical. If we offend against the sentiments they denounce the deed, be the temptations what they will. I have said, that it was because the Creator established Benevolence in Haggart's mind, and made it loathe and abhor murder, that his horror arose; and this opposition constituted the grand element of his Internal Responsibility. If Haggart could have removed that organ of Benevolence from his head, and the feeling from his mind, or if he could have altered its nature so as to approve of murder, or to feel delighted with it, then he would have been free from Internal Responsibility. But this he could not do; hence the very essence of Internal Responsibility is founded on the unalterable nature

of the human faculties, and the unalterable relations between them.

The degree of this Internal Responsibility differs in different individuals, because the higher organs are not possessed by all in equal strength; Haggart's Internal Responsibility was far stronger in regard to actions done in opposition to Benevolence than in opposition to Conscientiousness. Bellingham's was the reverse, although his was weak in both. The lower animals want these moral organs altogether, and hence they have no Internal Responsibility. The lion, when it tears its victim and devours him, gratifies Destructiveness and appeases hunger; when it retires to its den, and the excitement of appetite which prompted it to the deed has subsided, there is in it no organ of Benevolence to intimate that its meal was cruel, to sympathize with the struggling victim while it bled and writhed under its claws, and, in consequence, it reposes in calm serenity, quite satisfied with the action.

As then some men in so far resemble the lower animals as to be deficient in the organs that give rise to Internal Responsibility, and which the lower animals entirely want, the Creator has established an External Responsibility; and to this I now proceed. Man is a social being, and is surrounded by his fellows, and, in consequence of the relations established betwixt the primitive faculties and our fellow-creatures, each of us may be delighted in the highest degree, or subjected to the greatest pain, according to the impression which he makes on his fellows and they on him. Remove wife and family, and what a laceration of the domestic propensities! Remove the affection and esteem of this Society from the humble individual who now addresses it, and what an agony of grief would not be inflicted on his Adhesiveness, Self-esteem, Love of Approbation, and Benevolence! All this too arises from the natural constitution of the faculties and the relations between them and their objects. Now, it so happens that, in virtue of this constitution, and these relations, every abuse of any of the faculties in an individual is highly offensive to the

whole faculties of his fellow-men. Let us attend then to the Responsibility which follows from this arrangement of nature ; I call it the Responsibility of the Propensities, and it extends even to the lower animals. If one dog, under the impulse of its own Acquisitiveness, endeavour to steal the bone on which another is feeding, the inroad rouses Combativeness and Destructiveness in the latter, and the aggressor is worried for his pains. If one lion invade the den of another, and disturb him in his connubial joys, threaten his young, or attack his food, he will be roused to tear the aggressor to pieces. The offender perhaps supports his Acquisitiveness by the aid of his own Combativeness and Destructiveness, and then the propensities of the two animals maintain the struggle till the weakest is forced to submit. Here it is obvious that the animals act from the pure instinct of nature, and that there is neither free-will nor moral faculties to condemn the aggression or approve of the defence, and yet there is a high responsibility. The aggressor suffers a severe attack, and, if his strength is inferior, may be put to death for his conduct. Now, man possesses these animal propensities, and the same Responsibility is maintained in his case. If Destructiveness and Self-esteem prompt a man to insult another, the action wounds Self-esteem, and rouses Combativeness and Destructiveness in the offended party, and prompts him to inflict summary vengeance. If a man steal, this wounds the Acquisitiveness and Self-esteem of the victim of his dishonesty, and these rouse Destructiveness to punish him. All this, however, takes place in consequence of the nature of the faculties and the relations between them. To set aside this Responsibility, the lower animals and man would require to render murder, robbery, insult, and deceit, agreeable to the Self-esteem, Acquisitiveness, Combativeness, and Destructiveness of the parties against whom they were directed. If they could do this they would elude Responsibility ; but, as this is altogether impossible, Responsibility is rendered certain and inevitable, just because the constitution of nature, which they cannot

alter, carries the consequences necessarily in the train of the action.

But, in the next place, man possesses moral sentiments, and there is also an External Responsibility founded on them. Love of Approbation, Benevolence, Veneration, and Conscientiousness, exist in our fellow-men, and by their constitution they denounce and disapprove of every action in opposition to their dictates; and they give desires to prevent the repetition of all offences against them. When Thurtell murdered Weare, not only the animal faculties of Self-esteem and Cautiousness of society at large felt alarmed, and roused Combativeness and Destructiveness to desire his punishment, but Benevolence vehemently desired to prevent the recurrence of such an atrocity, because it was inconsistent with general good; Veneration abhorred it as a gross outrage of the divine law, and Conscientiousness felt strong dislike towards it as a grievous infraction of the duty due by man to man. These faculties then gave desires to avert the recurrence of so great an evil, and intellect acquiesced in the propriety of the wish. Here then Thurtell was responsible to both propensities and sentiments; let us trace now how they would respectively treat him. The propensities roused to vivid action would feel thus,—Self-esteem would writhe under the idea that self might be the next victim; Cautiousness would feel mortal terror of the horrible catastrophe; Acquisitiveness would be painfully affected at the idea of the robbery committed on the murdered man; if the deceased had been married, Amativeness, Philoprogenitiveness, and Adhesiveness, would have suggested the sufferings of his wife and children as an addition to the atrocity of the crime; these offended, would rouse Combativeness and Destructiveness; and, in the idea that there was no Benevolence, Veneration, and Justice in the mind, the whole man would pant for vengeance; the propensities would not be satisfied till they had dragged the criminal to the scaffold, shed his blood, and would find repose only over his lifeless corpse. The mere propensities would not desire to inquire

into the causes of the crime, nor the consequences of the mode of punishment they demanded; when roused by aggression, and unenlightened by intellect and sentiment, they are blind, selfish, cowardly, and cruel; their cry is for blood, blood, and whether the offence be murder, or forging a bank note, or stealing to the amount of forty shillings, the animal feelings still call out for blood, and are not satisfied with any thing short of the death of the wretched being who has invaded their selfish dominion.

The conduct of the sentiments and intellect is widely different. They desire universal happiness, and see that it can be obtained only by obedience to the law of God and man. They desire to inquire into the *cause* of the crime. Suppose them to perceive, what I have endeavoured to shew is the fact, that the criminal acted under the predominant impulse for the time of some animal propensity, that this impulse arose from internal vehement activity in the organ, or from activity induced by the strong excitement of external circumstances, and that the crime followed from these mental states as effects from causes in general;—they would still denounce the crime as hateful to them, for by their very nature it is impossible for them to love it; they would, by their nature, irresistibly desire to prevent its recurrence; and under these impulses, they would endeavour to find out how the *cause* might be removed. If it arose from excessive natural energy in the animal propensities of the offender, they would at once place him under physical restraint; if it arose from the excitement of excessive temptation, they would remove him from circumstances in which this excitement could arise. They, however, would desire no vengeance, no suffering inflicted on the offender, that was not necessary to prevent repetition of his crime; for the thirst for blood, and stripes, and pining in wretchedness, springs not from Benevolence, neither from Veneration, nor from Conscientiousness, but from wounded Self-esteem, awakened Cautiousness, vivid Destructiveness, *et hoc genus omne*. It is the animal which is cruel,

timorous, and harsh ; the human faculties are meek, merciful, long-suffering, and highly just.

The idea will perhaps occur, that this responsibility would prove an encouragement to crime ; that there would be no severity in it to make the criminal afraid of breaking the law. This, however, is a short-sighted idea. Recollect, that in every case where the criminal's animal instincts are so vigorous that they are prone to run irresistibly into abuse, the sentiments would desire, and the intellect would provide, physical restraint, continued, of course, through life, if necessary to prevent renewed offences ; bear this in mind, and look next at the faculties. The criminal so treated, would be deprived of the gratification of Amativeness and Philoprogenitiveness, for neither wife nor child ought to be permitted to live in society with him ; he would be deprived of the gratification of Adhesiveness, for friends he could have none ; he would be deprived of the gratification of Combativeness and Destructiveness, for bolts and walls would restrain these propensities ; he would be deprived of the gratification of Love of Approbation, for who could esteem him ? he would be debarred from the pleasures afforded by Ideality, for the lovely face of physical creation would no longer smile to him ; he ought not to be deprived of the joys of Benevolence, Veneration, Hope, Conscientiousness, and Intellect, but these should be cultivated to afford him a solace for his other deprivations, and to render him fit, if possible, for an increase of gratification to his animal nature, if he should ever attain to it without abuse. Would such a treatment be no responsibility ? would it serve as a motive to excite the propensities to higher abuses to attain it ? This appears to me impossible ; it would tend to sooth and calm their vehemence, and to subdue them by the very example of Justice, Beveolence, and Veneration, which it afforded.

There is a precept of the gospel, "do to another as you would have another do to you." Let us try with which system this is most consistent. A young man, employed as

a clerk in the London post-office, son of a gentleman high in office in the same establishment, having opened a letter and abstracted £5, without having ever before transgressed the law or failed in his public duty, was tried, convicted, and on 27th December, 1825, hanged. His accusers, the jury, the judge, the executioner, never thought it necessary to inquire into the *causes* of his crime; they assumed that he could have avoided it, if he had chosen, and each did his part in consigning him to eternity for this trifling offence; but if the persons had been reversed, if the judge had, under the same circumstances, committed the same offence, would he have then desired others to do to him what he did to the criminal? or would the executioner have desired the rope to be fixed round his own neck, and the fatal bolt to be drawn, and have acquiesced in it as just and benevolent treatment? No, they will not pretend that they would; and the reason is, because, in all this proceeding, the violence, and selfishness, and sanguinary spirit of the offended propensities are the inspiring motives, and these do not do to others as they would wish others to do to them. But look to the course which the sentiments and intellect would pursue. They would inquire into the cause of the offence, and find that it arose from excessive activity of Acquisitiveness and Secretiveness, too powerful for the degree of Conscientiousness with which they were combined,—this excess springing, either from natural disproportion of the organs, or from strong excitement from outward temptation; they would pity the young man as the unfortunate victim of these causes, while they would disapprove of his offence; they would inspire with the wish to prevent its recurrence, and would remove the cause. If it was excessive disproportion in the organs, they would apply physical restraint; if excessive temptation, they would remove him from circumstances calculated to excite his Acquisitiveness and Secretiveness. Now, imagine yourself judge, jury, and executioner of this sentence, would you not say, if ever I am so unfortunate as to offend thus, do unto me as I

do unto him? would you not solicit such treatment as a boon? because, if you were permitted to go on in unrestrained indulgence of your propensities, you would, at last, rouse the propensities of society, and bring the animal responsibility on your head, which, as I have said, is blind, cruel, and relentless; you would excite some hand to put you to death, either by the forms of a trial and public execution, or by instinctive violence; for restraint must stop offences against the moral law, and where the sentiments do not interpose, the propensities will at last repress them in their own way. A judge feels great reluctance to allow a criminal to plead guilty, because the moral sentiments instinctively recoil from the severity of the punishments, and desire to save the criminal from it by every possible device. If the sentiments approved of the treatment, the judge would recommend to him to confess for his own sake, as well as for the public good, because the consequences to follow, being dictated wholly by Benevolence, Justice, Veneration, and Intellect, would prove the most beneficial which could occur, even to the offender himself.

In the past history of the world, and in its present state, the predominance of the propensities is appalling. Look at a juvenile delinquent who steals a shilling from a counter; his whole treatment is dictated by angry animal feeling. No inquiry is made into the cause of his offence, but he is dragged to the police-office; perhaps flogged and set at liberty. If the cause was deficiency of moral organs, or strong temptation, the flogging removes neither. It may affect his Cautiousness, but if this organ had been strong, it would in all probability have restrained him before. He steals again; the bridewell and wicked associates are his lot; no effort being made to remove the causes, or to excite his restraining sentiments. He steals again, then the propensities of society can tolerate him no longer, they carry him to the scaffold, and put him to death. I do not mean to say, that judges and juries in these proceedings are raging and thirsting for blood. No, they

are humane, honourable, and upright men, but the law is raging and thirsting for blood : It was enacted in a barbarous age, when causes were not investigated, but when animal propensities bore the headlong sway ; the respectable individuals who administer it, have been trained to its forms and results, they have no theory of human nature to point out its defects, and no philosophical touchstone to try its merits.

A question has been lately agitated, whether man is responsible for his belief? and the solution of it affords an additional illustration of the views maintained in this paper. If responsibility arises from necessary connexion between fixed causes and their effects, then man must be responsible for his belief. For example,—the child believed the arsenic to be sugar ; but as this error in belief did not suspend the relation between the arsenic and the stomach, it suffered for its error, although it arose from mere ignorance. By the physical laws of creation, ice of certain thickness bears a certain weight ; if a man falls into an error in regard to the one or other of these conditions, and places his person of greater weight than the one recognized by the Creator as fit to be borne by the ice, it breaks, and he may be drowned as the consequence of his erroneous belief. The same rule holds in the moral world, and, by way of illustration, I shall endeavour to shew, that man is responsible even for his belief in Phrenology. In the head of Bellingham the organs of Destructiveness are very large, and those of Benevolence and Reflection deficient. It is the nature of an individual possessing such a head to be prone to violence and outrage. Bellingham was married. The lady whom he addressed (for he was in the rank of a merchant,) did not believe in Phrenology (because she did not know it,) and married him. But this ignorance and disbelief did not save her from responsibility. He acted in conformity to his nature,—was outrageous, violent, and ungovernable,—plunged her in misery, and brought on her the disgrace of his execution. Mr Perceval did not believe in Phrenology, also through ignorance,

and took no steps to ascertain the *causes* of the angry communications directed to him by Bellingham, or to inquire into the nature of the man. This omission did not save him from responsibility, for the causes produced their effects, and his life fell a sacrifice to Bellingham's fury. The following facts still farther illustrate the proposition now under consideration, and I am able to answer for their authenticity. On one occasion, a gentleman, who was well acquainted with Phrenology, intrusted a person with money, although he saw in his head deficiency of Conscientiousness, and knew him to be exposed to circumstances calculated to tempt him to abuse his lower faculties. He was induced to do this, because he received a flattering account of the man's moral and religious principles;—the testimony of those who recommended him having made a stronger impression on his mind than his belief in the effects of his organization. The man, being tempted, acted according to his nature, and embezzled the funds. Here the want of faith in the employer was followed by its natural consequences; and the loss of the property was the punishment or responsibility of his ignorance. But attend to the result, the gentleman alluded to, on comparing the offender's nature and circumstances, was convinced that, constituted as he was, and tempted as he was, he could not have acted otherwise. He did not therefore utter one angry expression against him, but recognised in the result the just consequences of his own ignorance and inattention to his nature. At the same time the offender did not escape the responsibility attached to abuse of the propensities. He was subjected to the reproaches of his own faculty of Conscientiousness, feeble indeed, but still existing; he suffered agonies of distress from his Love of Approbation which was large, and which writhed under the disgrace attached, as an inevitable consequence, to his action; he forfeited the confidence and esteem of his employer, and with them all their beneficial consequences. The Phrenologist stated, that he did not give him up to the criminal law, because he saw it to be irrational

in its treatment, and because, had he changed place with the culprit, he could not have approved of the enormous infliction of that law directed against himself. If the law had been founded on Benevolence, Veneration, Intellect, and Justice, and its treatment had been that of correction and restraint, the Phrenologist would have felt an irresistible obligation to deliver him up to its ameliorating influence. He unfolded to the man his nature, and the effects of external temptation upon it; pointed out to him the consequences of again placing himself in a situation, the duties of which his moral faculties were inadequate to discharge; urged him to seek an employment in which no trust was reposed in him, but in which the qualities he possessed might be useful; and pointed out to him the animal responsibility as certain to overtake him, and deprive him of liberty or life if he continued to act in opposition to the laws of his Creator.

As a contrast to this, I may mention another case. A few months ago, a boy was presented to a Phrenologist to be hired as a servant, recommended also as a fit person for the situation. He examined the boy's head, and found Acquisitiveness and Secretiveness large, with Conscientiousness and the moral organs in general deficient. This gentleman had more faith in Phrenology, and believed that unless he could supply external restraints the boy would steal, and as his own avocations put this out of his power, he at once rejected him. The person who, having received a favourable character of the boy from another quarter, had recommended him, on the faith of it, to the Phrenologist, ascertained within a fortnight that he was an habitual thief. Here the reward of belief and of attending to the nature of the individual was equally conspicuous. The loss of property, and all the pain of prosecution were avoided. Farther, in hiring a female servant on another occasion, a lady examined her head, and reported that Combativeness and Destructiveness were large, Cautiousness only full, but that the moral and intellectual organs were in considerable proportion; and added, that from the

character received from her former mistress, her whole faculties were active. This indicated a rapid, active, energetic disposition, and she was instantly hired. This servant also acted according to her nature. In sweeping and cleaning, and performing all kinds of work requiring energy and vivacity for their execution, she excelled; in the brushing of tables, rubbing of chairs, &c., the vigour of Combativeness and Destructiveness, guided by intellect, was conspicuous. But she was employed to clean a stair lamp on the drawing-room floor; acting without reflection, under the impulse of predominant faculties, she applied to this object the vivacity and force expended habitually and beneficially on articles of a different kind, and injured the lamp, so that it fell from its support headlong on another lamp hanging in the lobby below. A terrific crash was heard, and she hastened to the spot a distressed spectator of innumerable fragments of broken crystal. No reproach was offered to her; but she was directed to collect the pieces. The question first put in the family was, what could be the *cause* of this? On the development being mentioned, and the manifestations attended to, the lady at once saw that this destruction was the natural result of the servant's qualities, serviceable in a high degree when applied in a proper direction, and that the fault was the lady's own in not distinguishing between tables and glass. The loss was the natural responsibility or punishment of not attending to the servant's nature. The first proposal was to employ another servant, of a different character, in this work; but a suggestion was made by the lady, which you will understand from her illustration:—A man that is deaf, said she, is very liable to be rode over in the streets; but if he knows he is deaf, and that carriages drive there, his cautiousness will be more powerfully and habitually excited, and it will prompt him to take greater care to ascertain from inquiry, that the street is clear, before he ventures to cross it: so, said she, allow me to explain to the servant her own nature, and to recommend to her a higher exercise of reflection and cautiousness when

handling glass, and let the effect be tried. This was done, but only on articles of small expense, and no other accident has yet happened. The servant did not escape responsibility here. Her own Conscientiousness, Benevolence, and Veneration, made her very severely regret the loss she had occasioned, and as these faculties were consulted in the treatment she received, they made her a willing pupil in endeavouring to adapt her vivacity to the nature of the object on which it was to be exerted. It is needless to point out the difference of consequences that would have followed on the system of animal action. The aspect of the broken lamps would have roused Acquisitiveness and Self-esteem in the lady by the loss sustained;—these would have called up Combativeness and Destructiveness, a loud scold would have been applied, and great personal uneasiness and irritation endured. But the scold and the irritation, and all the writhings of wounded Acquisitiveness, Self-esteem, Combativeness, and Destructiveness, would have done nothing in finding out the cause, or providing a remedy. They would have roused the Cautiousness of the servant, and made her take care for a week or a month, or as long as the impression on that faculty lasted; but whenever it subsided, the former habitual vivacity would have recurred, and the same fault would have been repeated. The only way to prevent recurrence of the evil was, to give her motives to restrain her natural dispositions, and the treatment in this instance directed her intellect to the cause, and engaged her moral sentiments in enforcing its dictates, to prevent repetition of the offence. I do not say, that even all this will be successful; perhaps the propensities are too strong to be habitually regulated by intellect and sentiment, after long habit of acting without their control; but if so, the remedy is to employ them where they may be useful, and give the crystal in charge to a servant whose nature is soft, careful, and circumspect.

In adverting to responsibility for belief, there is one principle which I wish particularly to advert to. Those indivi-

duals in whom the propensities are not under the habitual command of the sentiments and intellect, have a strong desire, given by the propensities, to inflict the animal responsibility on their fellow men on account of their belief. When a person, for example, disbelieves Phrenology, and treats it and its supporters with ridicule and contempt, this wounds Self-esteem in the Phrenologist, and rouses Combativeness and Destructiveness, and these pant to retaliate the contempt, to wound the opponent's feelings in return, to treat him with ridicule, and cause him pain. Now this desire is wholly animal. If the intellect and sentiments are consulted, the former, on looking to the causes of his disbelief, will find them to consist in want of information, in a deficient development that cannot appreciate the evidence, or in active Self-esteem and Combativeness, that instinctively resist it. Intellect will see farther, that the opponent will suffer from the natural consequences of his disbelief in being deprived of the advantages which a knowledge of this science confers on those who adopt it as a practical principle; Benevolence would desire that he were freed from these disadvantages; Veneration would respect him as unfortunate; and Conscientiousness would give the feeling, that we *ought* not unnecessarily to add pain to his misfortune. These operating together, would prompt intellect to instruct him, so as to bring him within the pale of belief. If we trace the efficacy of these two methods, the superiority of the moral over the animal will be very conspicuous. If the Phrenologist manifest Combativeness and Destructiveness, in wounding the Self-esteem of the opponent by retaliation of ridicule, this will more violently excite Self-esteem and Combativeness in him; these animal faculties, on both sides, will engage in a bitter strife, the intellect will be turned into a sword to cut and wound, and Truth, Science, and Phrenology, will be lost sight of in the angry conflict. Under the moral treatment, again, all the animal faculties are laid aside, and intellect is pressed into the service of the sentiments, measures are taken to enlighten the

opponent's intellect, to disarm his Combativeness, to sooth his Self-esteem, and to engage his Conscientiousness on the side of truth, and then, if ever, the effect desired, namely, his conversion, will be attained.

As already mentioned, the doctrine of necessity, as here advanced, is not new, so that Phrenology can claim no merit, nor is it chargeable with any demerit, in so far as this view of human nature is concerned. It merely renders tangible to ordinary minds what before was seen and admitted by men of the profoundest intellect. Until, however, this science had brought to light, and established, by physical demonstration, the existence of organs and faculties of Benevolence, Veneration, Hope, Conscientiousness, and I may add Ideality, and showed that these have received a specific constitution, and been placed in determinate relations to the lower propensities, intellect, and external nature, it was more difficult to elucidate philosophically the source and nature of Responsibility. According to the view now presented, the moral law appears invested with the highest functions. If we are told that the word *ought* should be expunged from all languages, and *must* be used as the only term, I reply that, if Acquisitiveness blindly covet another man's goods, the faculty of Conscientiousness, in virtue of its constitution, proclaims that we *ought* not to steal; *ought* here expresses the feeling that arises in consequence of this faculty on an abuse of Acquisitiveness being presented to the mind. Acquisitiveness, on some occasions, may overpower it, and a man may, by invincible necessity steal, but this circumstance does not alter the dictates of Conscientiousness, it still proclaims that he *ought* not to steal; and, as already shown, its decisions are rendered effective, by the concurrence of all the faculties of our nature, in supporting and vindicating its authority.

If the doctrine be well-founded, that every individual acts according to his nature and the circumstances in which he is placed, the discovery of Phrenology will become an era in the history of mankind. Previously no means existed of

discriminating the nature of individuals, until they had manifested their dispositions in actions, and hence the means of preventing crimes were extremely limited. This is one great reason why the criminal law is so cruel. The lion, possessing no desires to avoid evil, and no reflecting faculties to enable him to discover how it might be prevented, reposes in sullen majesty in an open den, with the forest all accessible around him, and leaves every creature to stray within his territory or not, according to the impulses of its own desires; but if it does approach him, with one fell blow he inflicts on it the punishment of death. The criminal law has hitherto resembled the lion in this, that it had no means of discovering the tendency to invade its territory until the deed was done; and hence, perhaps, no alternative was left to it, but to hold up the animal responsibility, in all its terrors, to deter the animal faculties of society from crime. But Phrenology will give the law eyes to see, and intellect to understand, and enable it to obey the desires of the moral sentiments, which call loudly for preventing evil as infinitely more beneficial, not only to the criminal, but to society, than permitting and then punishing it. In the phrenological collection we possess more than fifty specimens of criminal skulls, and one feature runs through the whole, namely, a great predominance of the organs of propensity over those of intellect and sentiment, compared with the proportions of the same organs in persons naturally disposed to morality. If then it is the nature of individuals so constituted to commit crime, they will unquestionably do so until restrained, and society at large will not, by neglecting the knowledge of this fact, escape from the responsibility of disbelieving it; for their property will be stolen and their persons assaulted until they obey the dictates of the moral sentiments and intellect, by removing the causes of these evils, instead of indulging in mere animal resentment after they have produced their effects.

Finally, it may be asked, if all men act from necessity, why do I now address this Society, and recommend to them to

follow a certain course of action, as if they were free? The answer is furnished by the doctrine itself,—you must necessarily act according to your strongest desires; but the Creator has bestowed on you moral sentiments, which long for justice, mercy, and universal enjoyment;—by the law of their constitution certain external influences are calculated to rouse them to activity; and being active, they give a strong inclination to act in conformity to their dictates: Intellect, surveying these desires, and observing that all the external arrangements of the Creator are in harmony with them to produce only good, approves of their inspirations, and by this approval renders them Will. Now, in this essay I have endeavoured to present the exciting influences, to lay before your intellect and moral sentiments, objects calculated, so far as my humble ability goes, to stir them to action; and if I have fulfilled the requisite conditions, the desire and the will to embrace these views, and to act on them, will follow by the law of your nature, and not from any sovereign virtue in you to receive or reject them independent of principle and motive.

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