

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON AND
PHRENOLOGY.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF

PHRENOLOGY;

SHEWING

THE COMPLETE INEFFICACY OF THE OBJECTIONS LATELY
ADVANCED IN THE

Royal Society,

AND

THE REAL GROUNDS ON WHICH THE SYSTEM OUGHT
TO BE ASSAILED.

Like Apes,
With foreheads villanous low.—SHAKSPEARE.

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AND

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MDCCCXXVI.

C

AN
EXPOSITION
OF
PHRENOLOGY.

NOT a little noise has, of late, been made, by what we may call the jackalls and running footmen of literature, respecting the contest between the Baronet, whose name stands at head of the present pages, and the unclean and blustering absurdity which, it seems, passes under the appellation of Phrenology. Every insignificant art of philosophical quackery appears to have been exhausted in embellishing the interest of the combat—not merely by the friends, but by the antagonists, of the system :—those friends, we mean, who are stupid enough to hope that any plan of paramount investigation may be foisted into fame by the small confiction of “ Transactions” and “ Societies :”—and those antagonists, we would be understood, who are laudably strug-

gling to make up for a want of opinions in themselves, by a ready retailing of those of every body else. It is really with some measure of shame that we admit that *we* were, in some small degree, carried along by the common cry; and that we entered, with so many greater than ourselves, into the rooms of the Royal Society, with something like a positive hope that a stab was, at last, to be inflicted upon the vitals of, perhaps, the most tormenting and mis-shapen of all the systems which have lately sprung from the teeming womb of impudence and conjecture.

Nor, after all, was this very much to be wondered at. Undoubtedly it was a great step, and no insignificant honour, for a doctrine like Phrenology—if Phrenology it must be called—which had been draggled for so long a time in the vilest mire of ignorance and ridicule—which, a day or two ago, could number among its open advocates, at least in this country, only a few lounging lawyers and obscure physicians,—and which had even failed to *eat* its way into notoriety, by the ready, though rather strange, expedients of port and pudding,—to have at last drawn to itself the notice, no matter however hostile, of men whom the voice of the country had invested with something like a reasonable capacity to decide upon its merits. Up to the very hour of the present conflict, it was quite enough to answer to the obstreperous advo-

cacy or successes of the system of Phrenology, that, in point of fact, it had hitherto made no impression upon the philosophical mind of the kingdom. Hitherto, no individual of acknowledged eminence, no society of honourable standing or credit, had held it worthy of reply;—and, assuredly, that labour which had been rejected by every one of those illustrious persons, whose example gives the law on a question like the present, could hardly have devolved on the humbler spirits who must follow in their wake. But, with the annunciation of the present contest, it seemed that the hour of such an argument had for ever passed away. The tocsin of Phrenology had at length broken the slumbers or the contempt of the metaphysical world; and the young Alcides of the Spiritual Army was at length, we thought, to be sent forth to purge the universe of mind of the monsters and portents which had so long been vexing the quiet of their adherents. This was, we never will deny, a day of dignity for the Phrenologists; and all that, in the circumstances, we could wish for, was, that it should also prove a day of destruction. Since the arm *was* lifted up—and lifted up, we were bound to believe, with all needful judgment and preparation—we sincerely prayed that the stroke might be mortal. Grudging, indeed, to an enemy so truculent and earthly, the glory of perishing by a weapon dented in so many

well-fought fields, we certainly never could admit, for a moment, to the Phrenologists, the alternative of enjoying the honour of such a contest, without paying for it with their System.

With feelings, then, such as these—feelings of all friendship and prayer for one party, and of quite proportionate antipathy for the other—we passed in the crowd of genius and learning, to what it is no solecism to call the theatre of combat. Nor will we do that injustice to the respectable name of Sir William Hamilton to deny, that, at the time, we were not guilty of the slightest suspicion that the cause had been rested on an unworthy arm. The pride of an English college,—the friend of Dugald Stewart,—the competitor of John Wilson,—a professor of habitual research and admitted eloquence,—could hardly be esteemed an unqualified representative of the science, weighty as it is, which had been the study of his life. Then there was the place, the cause, the assembled multitude, rich in every thing that could stimulate exertion or distribute fame. There were the very flower and prime of our metaphysical Power, beaming their full approval on the itching brows of the expected conqueror. There also were the poor Phrenologists themselves, not a few, quaking, we doubt not, under the influence of terrors, to a ruthless disputant, not less stimulating than applause. Undoubt-

edly, never could the laurel of victory have been awarded with a freer hand, or under nobler auspices; and never, certainly, could it have smitten to the inmost centre of the vanquished, a feeling of more poignant or unutterable discomfiture.

Whether that victory *was* obtained,—whether that laurel *was* awarded,—it is now, we apprehend, a great deal too late to inquire. We certainly have no desire to exacerbate, by our reproaches, the compunctions of any generous spirit; and still less have we an inclination to howl our condolence into the ears that tingled erewhile, there can be no question, with the anticipations of triumph. Nor, in reality, do we find ourselves particularly prepared to be critical on an exhibition, the pomp and involution of which we fairly confess we were not very well able to understand. Certainly, with every desire to be considerate, we cannot altogether refer our present state of uninstruction either to the fickleness of memory, or to the ridiculous statute of the society against the taking of notes—even though that ordinance was here enforced in one particular instance, (no doubt, out of consideration for Sir William,) by rather an unseemly interruption. It is enough to say,—and grieved we are to say so much,—that the combatant appears, in the general mind, to have reduced himself to a very desperate dilemma. Either Phrenology is a true science, or Sir William Hamilton is a

bad metaphysician. Either the theory of material developments must be admitted, with all its consequences, in the apprehension of the million, of incurable absurdity, or Sir William Hamilton is incapable of proving that it is wrong. We lament that it should be so, both for his own sake and for his science. Above all, we deplore, from the very bottom of our souls, that an advised effort, not at once destructive, root and branch, of what is called Phrenology, should ever have been made:—and we now instinctively shut our ears against the tempest of vulgar gratulation, in consequence, about to be inflicted on us by the whole phalanx of its professors.

The rock on which, as it seems to us, Sir William Hamilton has permitted himself to suffer shipwreck,—and he had not even the credit of employing any new machinery to avoid it,—was the very common foolishness of imagining that that which professes to be a system of *facts*, can be overwhelmed, or, indeed, materially touched, by any antagonism of mere ethical theory or *opinion*. The question is not, to what conjectural absurdity in morals does Phrenology *lead*? but whether Phrenology be *true*? If the observations on which it affects to be established be true observations, it is our duty to swallow the system, whatever be its consequences. No matter what conclusions of absurdity some men may deduce and other men may deny; if the principles of the system

exist in nature, we are philosophically bound to admit them, and leave their results to Heaven. Atheism, Fatality, and Materialism, are terrible consequences, it is true ; but, after all, Phrenology may be admitted, though these things be denied. If its evidents be really laid, as we are told, in the very structure of man, we know that it is *impossible* that they should lead to any thing destructive of his interests or his nature. If they be true, we are bound, as such, to receive them ; and to attribute, in this instance, as we have done in a thousand others, the contrarieties to which they may appear to tend, but which we know to be erroneous, *not* to the immutable determination of the universe, or to the philosophy which is founded upon it, but to the necessity by which every human intelligence has all along been rivetted to error.— How many hundreds of established cases have we before our eyes, in which it is impracticable for *man* to discern either the spirituality of his essence, or the liberty of his will? Yet who, on the faith of such a contradiction, ever thought of discrediting the examples which he had *proved*, or the liberty which he *felt*? Till, therefore, the induction of Phrenology be invalidated, it is impossible that the philosophy itself should receive its absolute *quietus*. Whether this be worth the pains of any competent inquirer is a very different question.

But all this must not go without its qualification. Before the Phrenologists can call upon us to inquire, they must have produced a clear, connected, and congruous system. It will *not* be fatal to them, in this stage of the inquiry, and according to Sir William Hamilton, that they are driving us on to Atheism, Fatality, or Materialism; because, even if the *facts* be true, we know that these conclusions are impossible. But it *will* be fatal to them, even in this condition of the inquiry, that their reasonings are incomplete and preposterous—their system incongruous and subversive of itself—their nomenclature confused and barbarous, and their classification of faculty radically absurd:—because, if these be shewn, we know that the observations are false, and the observers themselves unworthy of belief. All this, and more, we rather pledge ourselves to make good; and, instead of troubling our heads with Sir William Hamilton, about the “practical conclusions,” we shall strike at once at the speculative principles.

What, then, are these Phrenologists who have so suddenly solved the mystery of six thousand years? Who are these bold adventurers who have succeeded in basing a secure philosophy on those very analogies, the rejection of which had formed the chief pretension of most preceding inquirers? They are mainly physicians and anatomists;—men who are accustomed to look on spirit only

through the veil of body, and whose very lives are exhausted in tracing back the phenomena of vitality to the developments of the trunk :—cast, by their very opportunities of examination, almost exclusively amidst distortion and disease ;—wedded, too, to a traffic, invariably prepared to enthral the ethereal spirit to its adjunct of clay, and a thousand times more fertile in metaphysical scepticism than all others put together. They spring, in fact, from the fungus-school of Spinoza, Hartley, and Darwin ; and, however ingenious they may be held as professional men, assuredly they have nothing of that sobriety or credit which the world demands, and justly demands, in those who apply the scalpel to the soul. They have made discoveries, too, we are told, in the anatomy of the brain ; and are, of course, anxious to magnify the importance of their achievement. These are the men who have struck out, it seems, a royal road to the depths of the human spirit. These are the persons who have given the stamp of truth to the boldest dreams of that material metaphysic which owed its birth to the rankness of a rude antiquity ;—passing from visionary to visionary, and from age to age, with accumulated absurdities ;—borrowed, at the resuscitation of letters, with a hundred chimeras more, by the eccentric fancy of Des Cartes, and flung, still nearer to our own days, into a measure of tangibility and form, by the yeasty intellects

of Hartley and Briggs. Yet, with some ingratitude, and more absurdity, the stoutest clamour of the Phrenologists is for the praise of Originality! The man who gives a new polish to the needle might just as well lay claim to the invention of the compass. If there be no novelty, whatever folly, in referring the whole developments of intelligence to specific impressions on the general mass of the medullary convolutions of the brain, there appears to be very little room for merit,—even if that merit were their own,—in ascribing particular feelings to particular sections.

It has all along been the hue and cry of the Phrenologists that their opinions have been misrepresented. This, no doubt, is singular enough, seeing that their system is so much a system of quantity and observation. It would be rather difficult, we imagine, to slander a theorem of Euclid, or mis-state the colours of the rainbow. But the melancholy truth appears to be, that, notwithstanding all their reliance on experiment, these people are quite as much at odds among themselves as the most malicious of their enemies could desire. We despise, however, to take advantage of their division. If they choose to depart from their principles, we shall not. We shall stick only to what will not be libelled, and cannot be denied.

The powers and changes of the mind, then, have their “*organs*” in the brain. We shall

not here cavil, though we might, about the employment of a term ; but demand, at once, what is the OFFICE of these organs? These men tell us themselves, that the office of the organs in the brain “ resembles ” that of the external instruments of perception : that, as we hear, taste, or smell by the means of separate organs of the outward trunk, so do we feel benevolently, firmly, or conscientiously, by the aid of independent instruments of the brain.—A strange analogy, it is true ; but let us see how far it will carry us. Has it ever been discovered that the delicacy of taste might be presumed from the *size* of the palate or the tongue? Have we ever been informed that the acuteness of vision might be determined by the dimensions of the eye? Or are we to understand that the sensibility of tactual feeling is exactly to be inferred from the superficial extension of the nerves? Does intensity in these matters increase with bulk? or, does a giant feel more keenly than a dwarf? Assuredly the instructions of experience are exactly the reverse. How, then, can these philosophers assure us that any other set of organs, the functions of which are made to “ *resemble* ” those of the rest, are to be pronounced efficient, or the reverse, merely from the quantity of their physical developments? Does the mind, which, in one instance, despises the dimensions of the organ, in another servilely depend upon them? Is

the divine intelligence of man a being of bloated proportions, that it requires space as the condition of its power? Or is it more laborious to pity or to love, than to see and taste, that one set of feelings should demand an extent and play of their physical organs for which the others have no necessity? To these anomalies, in the very principles and explanation of the science, the volumes of Phrenology give no solution.

But we have not yet done with the present analogy. The known external organs vary quite as much in mechanism and adjustment as the perceptions which they generate do in character or intensity. But it never *has* been shewn, and never *can* be shewn, that the brain is much more than a homogeneous substance, possessing, to all human appearance, in the cerebellum or posterior development, just the same sort of vessels and functions, the same pulpy and fibrous textures, which occupy the frontal or anterior portion of its mass. Yet these very regions, however co-ordinate, have been assigned to a crowd of faculties infinitely more various than the senses of hearing and of sight. Does, then, the variety of their power spring from locality alone? If the eye were planted in the situation of the ear, would the functions be different or exchanged? This is certainly not the least of the wonders of Phrenology. The same segment of the brain, which, placed

in the summit of the head, would impel the human being to veneration or benevolence, being planted above the ear, disposes him to carnage and murder ! Perhaps the variety resides in the inactive and senseless skull : But this is too monstrous for the Phrenologists themselves. Perhaps it is the locality of the soul itself which fills the adjoining regions with generosity and knowledge ; while those which are more removed continue to be sunk in doggedness and callosity ! Perhaps its ethereal couriers may rush with greater promptitude through the portions which are elevated, while they become jaded and attenuated in the voyage to those which are less noble and more depressed ! Yet even these suppositions, merciful as they are, will hardly save the system. No faculties can be more repugnant to each other than Cautiousness and Ideality ; yet their tabernacles have been planted in the same happy region. What has Wit to do with Tune or Time, that their marches should run together ? What ridicule has poor Benevolence deserved, that its single organ should be imbedded between the duplicate developments of Mimicry ? But the Phrenologists are much too staunch to be thrown out even by this. They take up the *caput mortuum* of a human being,—fit emblem of their own,—and having chalked out a series of fanciful formations on its surface, they call upon us to hear that this circle is the province of Self-esteem—this triangle,

the dominion of Benevolence—this oval, the region of Philo-progenitiveness—this untrodden territory, the Timbuctoo of future discoverers! No matter how contradictory and incomprehensible may be the faculties with which they have to deal, the charts and boundaries are laid down, with Hotspur, to the “ninth part of a hair.”

Again, an “organ,” to *be* an organ, must have activity: it must operate. Do, then, the “organs of the brain” operate upon the mind, or does the mind operate upon them? If the mind, of itself, be able to operate changes in their structure, their utility is destroyed; for the mind, which may act without them in one instance, may do so in all. But if the mind cannot operate without the previous agency of the organs, from whence, we ask, do they derive their own activity? Now, we must believe, if we believe any thing, that matter is, of itself, inert and passive: it must always be acted upon:—and there are just *two* modes in which impressions may be made upon it—from without, and from within. Admitting, therefore, that there were no solecism in the assertion, that, in respect to its “organs,” the mind may be held to be *within*, we have seen it to be impossible that spirit can be called in to give operation to that on which it depends for its *own* activity. To the other alternative, then, we are driven: the organs must be impelled from *without*. But without there is nothing

in communion with them but the inert and senseless bone, which the Phrenologists themselves have long ago deprived of every influence over spirit. By what *other* power, then, are the "organs" stirred into activity? Other power, as we have seen, there is none, but in the turbid and desperate imaginations of the disciples of Phrenology. Here, then, we apprehend, the "System" is for ever plunged into a slough, dark and inextricable as its own preposterous absurdities.

But, passing over these initial errors, let us take a look of the minuter logic and language of the System. Imagining that they have established a relation between certain varieties in the brain, and certain modes and intensities of thought,—a proposition which, even if made good, never could demonstrate that these varieties are the *causes*, or, as the Phrenologists term them, the "organs," of intelligence,—they assume it as proved that the mind is made up of a "*plurality* of innate faculties, meaning, by the word faculty, a *power* or instrument of thought of a *limited* nature and specific functions." This is, perhaps, the most outrageous *non sequitur* in the whole history of mind. Assuming, for a moment, as correct, the monstrous jargon by which a "faculty" is first defined to be a "power," and a "power" is afterwards shewn to be an "instrument,"—what leap of logic can be made, we ask, from a plurality of li-

mited "*organs*" to a "plurality of limited *faculties*?" What ground, in reason, is there for distinguishing the *soul* into limited and independent powers, of innate existence and specific functions, just because they have chequered the *brain* into bounded and quite separate formations? Does it follow, because matter is divisible, that so is mind? Is it sure, because the "*organs*" are local and independent, the feelings are not affections of the whole spirit? Because the eye and ear are separated senses, are we bound or permitted to infer that the perceptions which they engender engage or occupy but a *portion* of our mental nature? Whatever be the value of the observations on the skull, it is impossible that either they or any others should touch the ultimate adjustments of the soul. The human being knows nothing of powers but of operations. He is conscious, indeed, that he feels; but why or how he does so is a knowledge far too subtle for his ken. He may distinguish or distribute his emotions, just as he may conceive them to be contradictory or allied; but when he talks with the Phrenologists of the "*specific functions*," or "*limited faculties*," from which they spring, he passes at once from the path of science into an abyss of folly. He diverges from the clear sunlight of reason into the fogs of hypothesis, and blunders on, darkly and deviously, till the eagle pinion of his spirit at

last sinks fatigued into the torpid mire of absurdity and all uncleanness.

But where have the Phrenologists discovered the *limitation* of their "faculties," or, indeed, their "faculties" at all? Not surely in the skull; for that is the same, whether vitality be existing or extinct. Not in the operations themselves; for they tell us neither that they are limited nor universal. They speak only to their own existence, and can give no information of the ultimate adjustments from which they spring. Here, therefore, we are presented with a new and compendious metaphysic, which is able to develop the causes of intelligence, without looking into the changes themselves!

But all this shrinks into insignificance before the dashing use which is made of the "faculties," after the Phrenologists have equipped them to their pleasure. We have seen that "faculty" is first a "power," and then an "instrument;" at once the powder and the ball, the moving power and the object. We shall now discover, that it is just as easily convertible into an "organ" or a feeling! We need hardly now rake up the dull truism, that things to which the same definition may be applied are the same. But the same definition *does* apply to the "faculties" in the mind, and the "organs" in the brain. Both are enunciated as "instruments of thought;" both are "limited," and both have

“specific functions.” Now, the Phrenologists will concede that these organs and faculties are either one or two. If they be one, the system has plainly perpetrated a *felo de se*: if they be two, we have just a double set of “instruments,” playing the same tune—two series of “organs,” having precisely the same functions; an harmonious conjunction, which we are very far from having the atrocity to disturb.

The same summary work is made of poor Consciousness. This, we are informed, gives the knowledge which the mind has of its own operations. It is declared to be single; and though we are not favoured with its “organ,” is no doubt a “faculty” as well as the best. It is rather difficult, however, to discover the necessity of having one faculty to make changes, and another to inform us of them. Nor is it by any means easy to understand how Consciousness, which is declared to be *single*, should be made to result from a *variety* of “independent operations.” The unity of Consciousness, in fact, is of itself subversive of the whole science of Phrenology. To say that Consciousness is single and universal, is to predicate the same circumstance of the whole mental changes of which it tells. Thought, and the knowledge of it, are one; for the mind cannot be supposed to think, without knowing that it does so. It embraces in its ample bosom every shade and contrast of intellectual evolution: they are all the indivi-

sible offspring of a single power, and that power is the Mind itself. If Consciousness, which pervades every thing, be unity itself, that which *is* pervaded can hardly be more. If the doctrine of Phrenology, however, were consistent, Consciousness ought to be as multifarious as the "faculties" themselves. An "independent" power cannot, by principle, depend for its operations, or the knowledge of them, on any extrinsic agencies. To complete their science, therefore, the Phrenologists should invest every individual "instrument" with a separate and co-ordinate consciousness. This, however, they will hardly perform; for this would be to make every individual faculty an independent mind. Consciousness is the only link which binds together, on their hypothesis, the jarring and restless soldiery of the soul. At the same time, however, they find it rather an inconvenient appendage; and are studious, as much as possible, to cover it from our view. They assure us, that it is of no avail in the study of "functions," with the same ridiculous gravity as if *any* inquiry could be managed without the Consciousness of thought and reasoning. They magnify the merits of "experience," as if experience were something better than the mind, or out of it. These "functions," it seems, are to be developed by "comparing the power of manifesting the mind with the development of the brain," as if comparison were *no*

object of Consciousness,—as if even their own feverish fancies had discovered a “*power* of manifesting the mind,” or had fixed its *organ*,—as if, with all the rest of its divisions, the “mind” required one “power” to act, and another to “manifest” that action,—and, to crown the pyramid of folly, as if it were possible to “compare” an emanation of intangible spirit with the brute development of a material organ.

The disquisitions on the operations themselves are marked throughout by a quite equal absurdity. They are styled, in all directions, “*impressions on the mind.*” Everywhere the intellect is degraded from its activity to the condition of a mere recipient of the impulses of the external world. Sounds and smells are a thousand times designated as impressions *on* the mind. Now, either this is belief, or it is ignorance. If it be the former, *we* certainly have no desire, at this day, to enter into combat with so bungling a resurrection of the old scholastic notion of “IDEAS.” If it be the latter, we apprehend, that, by their own admission, the Phrenologists have shewn themselves to be utterly incapable of metaphysical discovery.

It is ungrateful, and we feel it so, to be hewing away at the dwarfish race of verbal blunders, while such a herd of gigantic follies are rising to the knife. We shall, therefore, dismiss this head of our impeachment with

an example or two, taken at random, from one of the hundred volumes of error which this race of gibberers have inflicted upon the world.* In a detail of the “functions” of the five external senses, we are enlightened with such philosophy as the following.

“If an *odour* make an impression on the olfactory *nerve*, the *impression* is immediately found to be agreeable or disagreeable; and this feeling arises from the constitution of the *sense*, and the *relation* established betwixt it and the odorous particles which excite it to activity.”

This is brief, it will be admitted; yet we hardly think it will be denied to be sufficiently absurd. Here we are informed, that an “odour,” which is exclusively an affection of the *mind*, is able to cause an “impression” on the “olfactory *nerve*.” This “*impression*,” which is, of course, a mere change of material particles, carrying within *itself* no affinity to pain or pleasure, is then made to be “agreeable or disagreeable:”—and this *feeling* is next made to arise, not from the constitution of the *mind*, but from that of the *organ*, here absurdly denominated the “sense,” and of its “relations” to a physical substance! In another quarter, we are instructed, that the organs of sense “*produce* impressions,” for which, before, we had

* Combe's Essays.

been referred to “particles” and their affinities. What can be more apparent, than that the “organs” are passive, and can produce nothing? Nothing, assuredly, except it be the very ignorance which could imagine it. Besides, if the organs can “produce” their own “impressions,” away, at once, with the material universe! With the same gravity, but with a little plainer contradiction, we are informed, that “every sense *perceives* impressions,”—as if a “sense” could “perceive” any thing but its *objects!*—as if the eye or the mind did not actually perceive the stones or the trees on which it looked, but two or three inverted figures sketched upon the retina!—as if the spirit did not truly hear the roaring of the cannon, or the voice of the trumpet, but was busied exclusively with the vibrations of the tympanum!

Let us now proceed to try, for a moment, the merits of the Phrenological theory and classification of faculty. Here, then, we may lay it down as an impregnable axiom, that the whole machinery of “innate, limited, and independent faculties,” is not only unspeakably preposterous, but, in all its parts, completely gratuitous and assumed. Supposing, if we can, the whole observations on the skull to be decisive and true, we discover, to be sure, some relation between certain developments and certain feelings,—but of the nature, number, and boundaries of *faculty*, we are

just as ignorant as before. To designate these developments as "organs," is of a piece with the other assumptions of the System. Nothing can be called an organ, till we are assured that it operates; and to assert, that at present any body can know, or can believe, that the segments of the brain do actually exert any such influence as is demanded for them, is preposterous and false. The divisions of the brain, in the present stage of the inquiry, are not organs, but signs; symptoms by which we are to judge of the modes or intensity of understanding—not efficient causes to which we are to attribute its activity. Whatever portion, therefore, of the plan of the Phrenologists may depend on fact, assuredly it is not the poor and blundering catalogue of generalities, to which they have given the name of Faculty. Wretched and idiotical, indeed, would be the MAN on whom Phrenology should shower all her attributes! Where are her organs in the brain, or on the skull, for sight, taste, feeling, hearing, or smell? On these heads the chart of the new discoverers is dumb! These simple elements have been forgotten, while the secondary feelings which, in all former ages, had been referred to them, have been dignified with independent territories. The MAN of Phrenology would not be able to *hear*, because the necessary organ had not been planted on his skull; but he would be an admirable judge of music, be-

cause he had been freely gifted with the faculty of TUNE! He could neither *see* nor *feel*, it is true, because a few vulgar powers had been forgotten; but he might become a skilful draughtsman, or an ingenious traveller, because he had been very carefully invested with the "functions" of LOCALITY and SIZE! Oh! but it may be said the outward organs are enough. The outward organs are nothing, but in so far as they communicate with the brain. Deprive them of that, and they are annihilated at once. They do not, like the "organs in the brain," communicate at once with the "organs in the mind."—They are "instruments," which require other "instruments" before they can operate. The deprivation of the one is quite equal to the extinction of the other. But the blunder does not rest at this. With true Hibernian precision, the Phrenologists have not only given too *few* faculties and organs to the mind, but a great deal too *many*! If they have hewed away head and heels, they have made up for the slaughter, by giving much more blood and bowels. They have appropriated provinces of the brain and faculties of the *mind*, to those mere earthly and animal propensities, which are but the conditions of a material life. They have given immortality to the loves of sex, place, and children, as if these were truly portions of a high and indestructible intelligence. They have mistaken,

too, mere shades of faculty for faculties themselves. They have made a faculty of Firmness, though that is only the *intensity* with which any power impels to activity. They have rigorously distinguished from each other Combativeness and Destructiveness, as if a broken head never could be the consequence of a battle. They have taken care to separate Cautiousness and Secretion, as if cunning and caution had nothing in common to do. They have multiplied an organ of Conscientiousness, as if that had not been already exhausted by Benevolence or Veneration. They explain the same mental developments sometimes by the presence of one faculty, and sometimes by the absence of another. And all this, though nature is "frugal" of her mechanism, and never forms "two" instruments to produce the same effect! *Eheu, mendaces!*

After all, we gather, that these people had some nebulous conception that they were making sad work of Faculty and its organs. This we collect from their industrious absurdity, in marking out those faculties, which they consider most important, and denominate "primitive," from such as they conceive to be only of doubtful reputation. Blind as they were to the simple fact, that, before "faculties" could be classified, it might be fit to prove that they existed, there is something specially instructive in the stolid ingenuity of

their distinctions. At one period, we were gravely told, that a primitive faculty is that “which is not proportionate to the *other faculties* of the individual.” But as it was not thought proper to inform us what those “other faculties” might be, it did not seem that any material light was shed by this important definition. Nor, indeed, was the knowledge of the “other faculties” of so much consequence, seeing that, though the “primitive faculties” were *not* to be “proportionate,” it was not observed whether they were to be greater or less. At another time, we were assured, that a “primitive faculty” is that “which disappears earlier or later in life than the *other faculties*.” Here, also, the “other faculties” were wrapped up in the same cloak of mysticism; and as it seemed that *all* faculties, if they “disappear” at all, must certainly disappear “earlier or later” in life, matters exactly remained in the old convenient obscurity.—Another desperate endeavour to achieve the definition was made by the assurance, that a “primitive faculty” was that which was “propagated” from parents to children:—but as this opinion involves a theory of too great delicacy for us, we readily relinquish it to the obstetrical understandings of the Phrenologists themselves.

But there is one little matter, in what may be called the Pathology of the Mind, much too curious to be slipped. The “faculties,”

we are assured, have their own proper distempers and convalescences; and each individual, it is said, "may *singly* preserve its own proper state of health or disease." If the faculties may be diseased, may they not also die? May they not go out, one after another, till the mind itself, which is their aggregate, be extinguished? What folly, then, to speak of spirit as indivisible and immortal! What folly, in fact, to speculate at all on the destinies of a being, the slave of so many conflicting changes and so much incurable decay! What is this, but to make the human spirit a theatre of antagonism instead of peace? What is it, but, instead of one mind, to give every individual a thousand, and every one of them an ephemeron? We despise that this should be dignified with the names of Atheism, Fatalism, or Materialism. It is more ignoble and inveterate than them all. It is idiotcy grafted upon empiricism.

We need not now tell, that, in most of the passages, the obscurations of the understanding have never been referred to the decrepitude of spirit, but to the senility of matter. The conductor might be shattered, but it never was imagined that the energy was less. The reflector might be blurred or broken, but it never was conjectured that the radiating influence could be dimmed. The image might be distorted by the perturbing of the medium, but it never was believed that the

eternal sunlight of the soul had been cankered by decay. These delusions, however, have now been consigned to the tomb of all absurdity. Phrenology has unfolded to us, that Reflection may remain, while Memory is gone. Its disciples have proved, that Wit may set the table in a roar, after Fancy has sunk into her grave. They have shewn, that a reasoner may discover differences by Comparison, long after he has ceased to draw conclusions by Causality; and that the ruin of an organ is just equivalent to an excision of the soul. As Consciousness itself has no charm against decay, they have shewn, too, that the mind may think, without knowing that it does so; and live on, in busy darkness, through the round of eternity, without being informed for a moment of its own existence!

But admitting, for we are willing to be kind; that every thing we have said has passed away without ruffling a feather of the System, what, we proceed to ask, would be its practical advantage? It would solve at once, we are told, the mystery of morals and of education. It would open up, it is imagined, the whole tendencies of spirit, and enable us to supply, at pleasure, and at once, a stimulant or a corrective. Now, to us, it seems to place us in no better situation than before. If the organs act at all upon the mind, it would seem that the study of character must be just as profitable as the study of develop-

ment. It would be just as easy, and infinitely more sure, we should imagine, to inquire whether an individual *does* feel or act in a certain way, than whether, from conflicting developments, he *ought* to do so. Action is one, but development is manifold. There is a standard by which we at once determine the merit or palliative of a given conduct; but the theory of organs, from which it springs, is a matter of eternal balancings and doubt. With the organs which we know, the question never is, whether *they* be great or small? but whether the *perceptions* be instantaneous and vivid? It is difficult, indeed, to see why, on the principles of Phrenology, the organs, having co-existent and independent power, should not also have co-existent and independent action—why, in fact, we should not love, pity, hate, steal, murder, pray, laugh, weep, the functions being local and independent, at one and the same period of time! But be this as it may, it is plain that we have no occasion to trouble ourselves with signs, when we can as readily obtain the things which they signify. Besides, either the organs operate upon the mind, or the mind operates upon the organs. If the organs operate upon the mind, Phrenology is useless, unless it can teach us, what is impossible, to mould at will their physical dimensions. If the mind operates upon the organs, Phrenology is equally at fault, because the treatment of mere intelligence is as much the property of every other system as of itself.

The intensity of Genius never can be determined by the organs with which it works. It is not in the chisel of Phidias that we should seek for the divinity of his forms. It is not in his pallet or his pencil that we should hope to discover the *contorno* of the immortal Angelo. It is not to a painter's theory of the glands that we should refer the tears of his Niobe; or to his analysis of the blood that we should attribute the carnations of his Cleopatra.

Such, however, is the system which has been started to regenerate the world! Such are the doctrines which are to fill up the shallowness of Bacon, Locke, Reid, Stewart, and Brown, with a new flood of light!

“ _____ 'Gainst nature still!
Thriftless ambition! what wilt raven up?”

What assumption of philosophy! What slavishness of error! Yet there is comfort in the thought, that a System so crude, insane, and empirical, has not been engendered in this country, hallowed, as it is, by the memory of so many mighty names, and distinguished, as it has ever been, by the severity of its speculations. It may, perhaps, serve to qualify our astonishment at the imbecility of poor human nature, that these portents were hatched among the congenial monstrosities of a German wilderness—not in the strength of mature intelligence, but in the raw and ram-

bling credulity of boyhood:—and that, having been nursed amidst the contagious bustle of travel and vicissitude, they have been educated to maturity in the excited atmosphere of clubs and disputation. Germany has not yet shaken herself free of the fogs of Gothicism: her mental pupil has not hitherto expanded in the full sunlight of discovery. She has put on, no doubt, much of the bravery of reason; but the rags and chains of her broken thralldom are yet clinging to her limbs. She has the wing of the eagle, but wants his clear and penetrating eye. Phrenology may serve well enough in the gluttonous infancy of opinion,—it may excite a stare in ignorance, or impart a tickle to phlegm; but it will not do, we trust, among a people who are cast in the happy mean between the soberness of reason and the audacity of hope. It must sink, like the Roman traitress, under the weight of the very notice which it has invoked.

In what we have observed, we do not believe it can be said that we have libelled the Phrenologists. We have entered into no cavil, nor have we wished to profit by any difference. We have dealt with the System in its simplest elements; and, as far as may be done by this sort of reasoning, we flatter ourselves, destroyed them. Our charges against it may be summed up in a word:—They are, that the whole system of “faculty” is gratuitous, and a lie:—that the whole machinery of “organ”

is conflicting and preposterous:—that if reason be right, the “ observations ” cannot be true : —that, even if these were just, it is not proved that the “ sections ” are the “ organs ” of the mind, any more than a sign is the “ organ ” of the thing signified, or a finger-post the organ of the road to which it points : —and that, even taking the whole theory to be infallible, we are in no better condition than before, in respect to the great matter of discovery, the training and development of the Soul.

We have not stated, as we might, that, in Hydrocephalus, the effusion of the fluid has frequently, to every human appearance, annihilated the whole substance of the brain, without touching, in the least, the phenomena of our intellectual and moral nature:—we have not insisted, with the great Haller,—himself, in some sort, a Phrenologist,—or with Ferrier and Gordon, that there is no single portion of the mass which has not, in a hundred cases, been separately extinguished, without drawing with it the slightest failure of our spiritual existence:—nor have we argued, as we could, against the theory of independent organs for independent feelings, that the brain may be a single organ, operating throughout all varieties of intelligence, just as well as the folds of the stomach can form but a single organ, operating on all varieties of aliment—as the instruments of touch and taste are but single organs, what-

ever be the multitude or conflietion of their sensations—or as the lungs are to be held but as a single organ, however they may be distinguished into lobes, vesicles, and compartments. We have not grappled, as was within our power, with the amazing idiocy, which can form its theories of the *human* spirit on observations avowedly founded on the *brute* creation. We have passed, as of no validity, the unquestionable fact, that the developments of the brain are *not* indicated by the superficies of the skull, and still less of the muscles and integuments of the scalp. Nor have we even reposed any special stress on what we are bound to esteem the wretched folly of what the Phrenologists assume to be their experiences and observation. We have not inquired, in the assurance of the impossibility of reply, whether that be OBSERVATION of “natural” faculty, which is based on a mere conjecture of intellectual directions, long after knowledge, habits, and guilt, have assumed their refining or polluted influence over the very subject of experience? We have abstained from asking, whether that be a true INDUCTION, which relies for its veracity on the immediate truth or artifice of the human being himself; adopting, as its evidence, the mere babblings of report; and absolutely holding a man to be a good witness to his own character? Nor, in fine, have we demanded, whether that be really EXPERIENCE, which

rakes up its metaphysic from prisons and the scaffold; coloured all over by the governing fantasies of a system; and which has actually advanced a scratch of the head, or the pointing of a finger, as an instinctive token and stimulant of the organs of the SOUL?

