

We may judge how reliable an estimate of character the expert phrenologists of 1829 could make when we are solemnly told that Burke, one of the most desperate and cold-blooded of modern criminals, a man who could break the back of a child, who a moment before was sitting on his knee and whose grandmother he had just smothered, "was deficient neither in benevolence nor conscientiousness". He was a savage, drunken monster, and we are informed he had a "bump" of veneration and of philo-progenitiveness. This philological exactitude means "love of children"—possibly he loved children after the fashion that Germans love the weaker nations around them. Burke and Hare also murdered an Italian boy, a street musician, who carried about tame white mice; the phrenologists must have overlooked the bump of love for harmless foreign musicians. Burke not being physically so perfectly repulsive as Hare, acted as the decoy to entice his victims into the den in Tanner's close. And yet the list given us of nice bumps is a long one. We need not thrash a dead horse; the pseudo-science of phrenology died long ago believing to the last that the cerebellum is "the organ of amative-ness". Of course Burke had a large cerebellum.

As will be gathered from the passages quoted from Scott and Cockburn, the public certainly believed that Dr. Knox and some of his assistants were aware that murder was being committed, even if they did not instigate it. The popular outcry against Knox was very intense. He was called for at the trial, and at the execution the crowd cried, "Hang Knox too". The windows of his house at 4 Newington Place were smashed by the mob, and for many years he could not live in Edinburgh. This bitter feeling was not confined to the lower orders, for, as is seen in the quotation given later, Sir Walter himself did

not think that Knox ought to have come forward and attempt to read an anatomical paper at the Royal Society, as he proposed to do, within three weeks of the conclusion of the trial and while the monster Burke was still unchanged (January 14th, 1829). Certainly good taste was not one of Knox's strong points. Lord Cockburn, however, considered Knox perfectly innocent. There exists a declaration signed by Burke while a prisoner in the Tolbooth, to the effect that neither Knox nor any of his assistants was, as the lawyers put it, accessory before the fact. The scrawl runs thus: "Burke declares that Doctor Knox never incouraged him. Nether taught or incoreged him to murder any person Nether any of his assistants that worthy gentleman Mr. Fergeson was the only man that ever mentioned anything about the bodies. He inquired where we got that young woman paterson. Sined, William Burk, prisoner."

Knox demanded that a committee of prominent citizens should be formed to investigate the rumours and charges in regard to him. The committee consisted of Mr. Allan, banker; Dr. W. P. Alison, Professor of the Theory of Physic, the University; Sir George Ballingall, Professor of Military Surgery; Mr. Brown, Advocate; Sir William Hamilton, Bart., Professor of Philosophy, University; Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Robinson, Secretary to the Royal Society; Mr. Russell, Professor of Clinical Surgery; Mr. (later Sir) George Sinclair; Mr. Stewart, Advocate.

After deliberating for six weeks, this commission issued its report on March 13th, 1829. It is given in full in Lonsdale's "Life of Knox", and there occupies three crown octavo pages of small print. The report concludes in these words: "The extent therefore to which (judging from the evidence they have been able to procure) the committee think that Dr. Knox can be blamed on account of