

COLONIAL PEARL.

A VOLUME DEVOTED TO POLITE LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND RELIGION.

Published every Friday evening, at 17s. 6d. per Annum.

VOLUME THREE.

FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 20, 1839.

NUMBER FIFTY ONE

For the Pearl.

PHRENOLOGY:

ITS OPPONENTS, ADVOCATES, PROGRESS, AND USES.

A Lecture delivered before the Members of the Halifax Mechanics' Institute, on Wednesday evening, November 20th.

BY DR. WILLIAM GRIGOR.

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In consequence of our Press not occupying subjects of science, the public of Nova Scotia know but little of the progress of the more modern sciences. And it is owing in a great measure to this circumstance, that we every now and then hear persons speaking of the demise of Phrenology—that it has had its run among the wonder-lovers of the day, and subsided with the gratification of their vulgar curiosity. So apt are we to think in the repose of this remote portion of the British dominions, that things cease to be, because we do not happen to hear of them! Nothing shows the importance of the Press more than this. The Press, like the wind that carries the subtle rudiments of thousands of the vegetable kingdom on its wings, disseminates far and wide, over sea and land the germs of knowledge. The Press keeps alive, by the agitation it excites, the vast region of thought which the genius and industry of man have created. Here again, like the winds, it prevents stagnation and corruption. And but for it, what would our fate be? We might as well live in the despotism of Siberia, or, in the centre of Africa, with our minds as barren as its deserts—and our whole mental world almost a chaos.

Thanks to the Press, therefore, we know that Phrenology is neither decaying, or, likely to decay. And on the contrary, I will endeavour to show that its advancement is equal to any other contemporary science of our day, and in point of the strength of its disciples, estimated by their education and intelligence—by their talents and genius,—it is superior to most other sciences now in operation.

It was lately stated in the Monthly Magazine, that "not a single man of sterling genius, not a single literary or scientific person of real eminence has designed to become a promoter of Phrenology; nay, amongst the thousands of so called Phrenologists, scarcely a dozen of them could cut a respectable figure in any assembly of third rate talent." Now, this is a bold assertion, and the confidence with which it is written, might induce many to believe it well founded. But allowing it to be the case, the writer might fairly be asked, what matters it to the value of a thing that is true, whether it be handled by men of third rate talent, or men of first rate talent? It is certain that the latter might handle it better, and illustrate it with more brilliancy; yet still the truth would be the same, in a scientific point of view, and just of as much intrinsic value as if it were altogether in the hands of first rate men. It is not of men, however, it is of the truth of the facts that the writer ought to have spoken. By this reasoning he might assert, that polygonal lamps are nothing, because they have not the glorious effulgence of the sun! It is a fact however, that they exist, and that is quite reason enough that we should make use of them, even with their inferiority to the sun, whether it suits the talents of third rate or first rate men. And will any one, who has read Gall with attention, say, that as a Philosopher he is inferior to Sir David Brewster,—that his reasoning is less inductive,—or the matter upon which he has devoted his whole energies of less importance to the interests of mankind? I consider it as certain, as, that the improved polygonal system of Sir David, in lighting up the dark and dangerous shores of England, will prove the salvation of thousands of mariners as they are hurried by the gale through the dark and stormy seas of winter, that Phrenology, by lighting up the hitherto dismal atmosphere of mental Philosophy, will prove the beacon of hope and safety to millions of the human race, that otherwise would be lost on a coast whose dangers are far more awful to contemplate than those lashed by waves of the ocean.

The reply of the Phrenological Journal to this sweeping charge of the Monthly is like every other reply to its opponents, ample, and decisive. In France it quotes a dozen names only to suit the interrogatory of the Magazine; which all acknowledge who know any thing of Parisian science.

The following men, all eminent, are active Phrenologists.
Audral, Professor in the Faculty of Medicine of Paris.
Blondeau, Dean in the Faculty of Law of Paris.
Broussais, Professor in the Faculty of Medicine of Paris.
Cioquet, Professor in the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, Surgeon to the Hospital of St. Louis.
Comte, Professor of Philosophy in the Athenaeum.

David, Sculptor, member of the Institute.
Jullien, Editor of the Revue Encyclopedique.
Lacoste, King's Council.
Le Noble, Head of the Department of Public Instruction.
Poncelet, Professor in the Faculty of Law of Paris.
Roger, First Secretary at the Jardin des Plantes.
Sanson, Surgeon to the Hotel Dieu.

And least the writer in the Monthly should not admire men of genuine talent, because of French origin, the Journalist brings him home to his own country, and mentions a few dozens in Great Britain and Ireland, who taken at random, will satisfy any one that there is neither want of talent nor eminence among Phrenologists, but that there is a strange ignorance and want of information among the opponents of Phrenology. The following names will speak for themselves.

Dr. Ellioton, Professor of Medicine, London.
Dr. Gregory, Professor of Chemistry, Glasgow.
Dr. Hunter, Professor of Anatomy, Glasgow.
Dr. Nichol, Professor of Astronomy, Glasgow.
Revd. David Welsh, Professor of Divinity, Edinburgh.
Mr. Whetstone, Professor of Natural Philosophy, London.

In Ireland we find.

Dr. Evanson, Professor of Medicine, R. College of Surgeons.
Dr. Jacob, Professor of Anatomy, R. College of Surgeons.
Mr. Lloyd, Professor of National Philosophy, Dublin.
Mr. Cryfield, Professor of Political Economy, Dublin.
Dr. Maunsell, Professor of Midwifery R. College, of Surgeons.
Dr. Montgomery, Professor of Midwifery, College of Physicians.

From the Fellows of the Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh and other chartered and scientific societies in England, a dozen of names are taken at random—any one of which would certainly be rather a formidable opponent to a mere member of an assembly of third rate talent. A half dozen authors are added from the departments of medical and political Philosophy of mind these are—

Dr. E. Barlow, author of Essays in the Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine.
Mr. W. A. F. Browne, author of Lectures on Insanity.
Mr. R. Cobden, author of the Treatise by a "Manchester manufacturer."
Sir W. C. Ellis, author of the Treatise on Insanity.
Mr. C. Maclaren, Editor of the Scotsman.
Dr. W. Weir, lately Co-Editor of the Glasgow Medical Journal
A few Editors of the best of our Medical and other Periodicals are also given.
The Analyst. The Lancet.
The B. & F. Med. Review. The Medico-Chirurgial Review.
Chambers' Edin. Journal. The Naturalist.

And to these are annexed the late able Editors of the Phrenological Journal.

Dr. Andrew Combe. Dr. Richard Poole.
Mr. George Combe. Mr. W. Scott.
Mr. Robert Cox. Mr. James Simpson.

These dozens of names are taken to meet the challenge of the Monthly to the letter—and the Journalist offers to quadruple the forty eight celebrated names which he takes at a hazard, should the challenger wish for further information.

At a late meeting of the British Association, it was proposed to make Phrenology one of the sections for investigation. This proposition was thrown out by some of the influential leaders of the Association. But the result has been, that so many of the Association were Phrenologists, that they immediately called a meeting, and though the notice was scarcely 24 hours, the room which was occupied by the British Association, during the preceding "five days for the consideration of Mathematical and Physical science, and possessed the attraction of Sir John Herschell, Sir David Brewster, Professor Whewell, and other lions of the British Association: nevertheless, the room had never been so well filled; nor had any section of the Association during the week retained so numerous and so attentive an audience, during so long a time." The result of this has been, that a resolution was passed, that a Phrenological Association, distinct from the British Association, should be formed and should henceforth meet at the same times and places with the British Association. Among the vice Presidents, Secretaries, and members of committees of this Association, it is astonishing to find such a considerable proportion of scientific names, all of whom are Phrenologists.

Thus we have an additional argument, not only in favour of the

numbers of scientific men engaged in the study of Phrenology, but also interested in the importance of supporting and disseminating its truth.

And upon what better authority have most of us our belief in optics, geology, or astronomy? Do we not indirectly take it from the testimony of men educated and practised in these several sciences? Many of us are not familiar with the facts; yet we believe them, though there are discordances among men of science respecting them. They are founded on facts, and become sciences in consequence of the deductions made from them. But though Phrenology is founded on as great a number of well-observed facts as any other science, yet because a few individuals, who have never studied it, who pretend to be judges at the very moment they declare their ignorance, Phrenology is, therefore, to be held up as a bundle of material without a habitation or a name. It would only be fair in such persons, if they did not like the subject, to hold their comment on it, or to study it, and after knowing it thoroughly, as other sciences are known, then, with their knowledge and judgment matured, give their criticisms to the world.

Besides these evidences of the truth of Phrenology as a science, we find that all throughout Britain, Phrenological Societies are formed, or forming, and able lecturers invited to illustrate the doctrine. In these Societies museums are forming,—by far the most useful mode of collecting and acquiring practical information on this or any other subject of a physical or a physiological nature. The Phrenological Journal is published quarterly, and it is not too much to say of it, that in point of talent, philosophical research, and general interest, there are few works of its nature or extent, that approach or equal it.

A work of similar import is published in Paris.

In America, the Phrenological Library is in course of publication, which will prove a compendious work when finished. It embraces the writings of almost all the leading Phrenologists. Since Spurzheim and Combe have visited the United States Phrenology is rapidly increasing in talent and numbers.

The advantages to be derived from Phrenology are already being elicited in many points of view. And the education of youth in particular, is acknowledging the influence which it is exerting in the formation and management of schools. In the mode of teaching most suitable to the young; the fitness or unfitness of individuals for certain descriptions of learning and knowledge,—ascertaining by it, even the qualifications of school masters themselves, for their respective duties.

A school is now forming in Glasgow entirely on this doctrine. And if you wish to know what it is likely to effect in this way, I refer you to Simpson's work on education, which surpasses all other works on this subject, just because it is founded on phrenological views. The great reformation which this work is destined to effect on the training of youth, is already advancing,—and the crowds that every where attend Mr. Simpson's lectures have seldom been equalled, and prove how much the people of Britain have his doctrine at heart. His system is a national one—which, when established, will set Phrenology beyond the reach of cavillers. It will then produce an important change on many subjects of vital importance to mankind—such as Mental Philosophy, Natural Theology, Ethics, Political Economy, Criminal Legislation, and on all matters connected with Taste, the Fine Arts, and the social condition of man. Any one of these subjects might be made the text of a lecture or a series of lectures, in which the bearings of Phrenology might be followed out, with equal advantage, but to which we can only refer at the present.

With respect to education, it will suffice to say, what a fearful condition is the system at present in, comparatively to that which Phrenology approves. How many children are forced into a study beyond their powers—and even injurious to their intellects—how many are driven by intimidation, to apply themselves to tasks which their faculties cannot reach—how many are punished for being slow at one exercise because they are clever at another—to what expense are parents at in thus educating their children without a knowledge of their capacities—what sums are spent on Music, Painting, and Drawing, where there are deficiencies of faculties for either? To what mortifications is youth thus exposed? How many young men study Divinity, Medicine, or Law, who are entirely unfit for their duties, but are forced to do so by the caprice of their parents? What a field there is here alone for reformation and improvement?

Need I appeal to your own experience for the confirmation of something of this kind? Are there no mechanics here, who, in their time, have had apprentices whom they could neither