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PHRENOLOGICAL CHARACTER

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OF

REUBEN DUNBAR,

WITH A SHORT TREATISE ON

THE CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF CRIME,

BY MRS. MARGARET THOMPSON,

PRACTICAL PHRENOLOGIST.

If, in physics, imperfect empirical knowledge renders the unknown qualities of bodies liable to frustrate the efforts of man to apply or accommodate his conduct to their known qualities—and if only a complete and systematic exhibition of ultimate principles, and their relations, can confer on science its full character of utility—the same doctrine applies with equal or greater force to the philosophy of man.—COMBE.

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ALBANY:  
P. L. GILBERT, MUSEUM BUILDING.  
1851.

AMERICAN HOTEL, PARLOR 22, }  
*Albany, Jan. 1, 1851.* }

MRS. MARGARET THOMPSON will remain in Albany during the winter, at the American Hotel, State street, where she may be consulted professionally for Phrenological Examinations, Charts, and Written Descriptions of Character.

For further particulars see advertisement in the *Albany Evening Journal*.

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PHRENOLOGY  
OR  
THE SCIENCE OF THE MIND  
BY  
J. C. MANN

I look upon Phrenology as the guide of Philosophy, and the handmaid of Christianity; whoever disseminates true Phrenology, is a public benefactor.—HORACE MANN.

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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In presenting before the public a phrenological description of the character of Reuben Dunbar, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we have not the most remote idea of influencing the public mind for or against him. After a fair and impartial trial, which was conducted with great ability, his doom is sealed, and he must shortly appear before a higher tribunal, and receive sentence "According to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil."

With the guilt or innocence of the prisoner, we have nothing to do. We will give a fair and accurate account of his phrenological developments, and leave our readers to judge for themselves, how far the developments of his brain correspond with the supposed perpetration of the crime for which he is now under sentence of death.

M. THOMPSON.

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## THE PHRENOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF REUBEN DUNBAR.

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His physiology is sound and good. He has a fair proportion of all the temperaments, with a predominance of the vital. The size of his head is  $22\frac{3}{4}$  inches in circumference, over the organs of Individuality and Philoprogenitiveness; and  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches over the top, from Destructiveness to Destructiveness, over Firmness. The size of his phrenological developments, on a scale of from one to seven, are as follows:

Amativeness, 5; Philoprogenitiveness, 4; Adhesiveness, 6; Inhabitiveness, 5; Concentrativeness, 4; Vitativeness, 6; Combativeness, 6; Destructiveness, 6; Alimentiveness, 6; Acquisitiveness, 6; Secretiveness, 7; Cautiousness, 6 to 7; Approbateness, 7; Self-Esteem, 4; Firmness, 7; Conscientiousness, 4; Hope, 5; Marvellousness, 4; Veneration, 4; Benevolence, 5; Constructiveness, 5; Ideality, 4; Sublimity, 5; Imitation, 5; Mirthfulness, 5; Individuality, 6; Form, 6; Size, 6; Weight, 6; Color, 6; Order, 6; Calculation, 5; Locality, 6; Eventuality, 6; Time, 5; Language, 5; Causality, 5; Comparison, 6.

The intellectual lobe of his brain is well developed; but his temperament is not sufficiently

active to render him eminent in high intellectual attainments. The temperament, viz: the quality or texture of the brain, is of as great importance in indicating character, as its size and developments. He may be said to possess a fair amount of natural talent, which by proper cultivation and discipline, and close application to study, might make him a proficient in the natural sciences, particularly in chemistry, botany and geography. He possesses also considerable mechanical ingenuity; he is endowed with good reasoning faculties; would be fond of argument, and is capable of taking a common sense view of things in general. He possesses tact and shrewdness in forming plans, and his large perceptive intellect combined with his strong propelling powers, enable him to execute and carry into effect his plans and projects. He has good judgment and discrimination with regard to material things, their existence and relation to each other, that come within cognizance of the external senses; can judge well of the value of things, so as to make good bargains. His intellect, as combined with his other faculties, would be almost wholly engrossed in forming plans to make and accumulate money, and acquire property. His phrenological developments indicate a good memory, a desire to read and acquire knowledge and general information. He is deficient in concentrativeness; hence lacks ability to apply himself for a sufficient length of time to finish and perfect what he commences. He is apt to be satisfied with a smattering or partial knowledge of things; would be likely to invent a variety of ways and means to obtain money, and follow different pursuits to accomplish this end.

Ideality and Sublimity are not sufficiently large to give refinement of feeling. He has but

little taste for the beautiful and sublime in nature and art. He is more a plain matter of fact, than a refined and sentimental person.

His organ of Adhesiveness is large. He is capable of forming strong friendships with some individuals; but is not generally social and friendly; his likes and dislikes are very strong. Philoprogenitiveness is only average. He might love his own children, but would not care for the children of others; and his large Destructiveness and Combativeness would incline him naturally to be impatient, severe, and even cruel with children over whom he has control.

His selfish propensities are large, while his moral faculties are between full and average. In such an organization the selfish feelings have a very powerful influence, and without great care and constant exercise of the moral organs, will be sure to gain the ascendancy. Acquisitiveness is large and very active. This gives him a strong desire to obtain money, property, &c.; and with his inferior moral brain, would lead him to be penurious and covetous. Secretiveness is very large. He is exceedingly cunning, and capable of acting artfully and deceitfully; has uncommon power to conceal his real feelings. Seldom discloses his plans to others; is secretive and says little. Destructiveness and Combativeness are large also; so is firmness. These, with his other combination of organs, make him quarrelsome, harsh, severe, self-willed, tenacious of his rights, wilful, and desperately determined.

Conscientiousness is average. He has some, but not a strong sense of moral right; is very liable to err and yield to temptation. Love of approbation being large, he would favor and take sides with any system, sect or party that is

likely to be the most popular, and bring the greatest amount of interest to him and his particular friends.

Self-Esteem is average. He lacks true dignity of character; is low minded, selfish and groveling; can stoop to do mean things; has very little sense of honor. He is not inclined to be respectful to his superiors; is deficient in courtesy and politeness of manners.

Veneration is not more than average. Marvelousness is average also. He may believe in God, or a great first cause, but does not believe much in the supernatural; has but little faith beyond that which reason can comprehend and account for, and explain on natural principles. If he is inclined to be religious at all, it is from dread of punishment, which arises from his Cautiousness, which is very large, and a love of popularity, which comes through large Approbativeness. He has a strong abhorrence of punishment and annihilation; has a strong tenacity for life. His organization would naturally lead him to look on the Divine being as a God of vengeance, "a consuming fire," rather than a God of benevolence, one who is kind, long-suffering and full of compassion.

His organ of Benevolence is fully developed, but exercises quite a limited influence in his character. The selfish feelings take the lead, and control the entire man. He possesses a considerable degree of sympathy and kindness of feeling when in a pleasant mood, and may manifest feeling for persons in sickness, but he has scarcely any generosity, and would withhold money from the distressed and indigent. His benevolence is not of that character which makes an individual universally kind-hearted, tender and sympathizing.

His organ of Hope is full and active. He is sanguine in his expectations of future good; is inclined to anticipate good rather than evil.

The above remarks have been made strictly in accordance with the phrenological developments of his brain. If the prisoner has committed the crime with which he is charged, his large Destructiveness, Combativeness, Acquisitiveness, Secretiveness and Firmness, with small Philoprogenitiveness, have been the cause. The size of these organs, as combined with other faculties, especially if perverted, indicate an unfortunate organization; one in which the animal propensities govern, because the moral faculties are not sufficiently large to balance and control them. Such an individual is capable of committing desperate deeds; yet may be said to possess some redeeming traits of character. A human being, possessing by nature such an inferior organization, certainly has strong claims on the sympathy and commiseration of those on whom the Creator, through a better line of ancestry, has bestowed a higher order of intellect, and more elevated moral sentiments. There must at least be a full development of the intellectual powers, combined with large moral faculties, to hold large animal propensities in proper subordination. Much also depends on the training and influences by which such a person is surrounded, to show signs of improvement. Still, with the best system of education applied to bring out his faculties, and the most careful and proper mode of discipline, he would never become remarkable for great elevation of character or high moral standing.

Society is, for the most part, based and educated on a wrong principle. Crime is caused by an abuse or perverted action of the animal

propensities, owing principally to education, and partly to the hereditary transmission of those faculties from parents to their children. In the training of children, most parents begin in their infancy to exercise the organs of Aquisitiveness and Alimentiveness, while the culture of the moral sentiments are almost wholly neglected; so that that which is the most active in infancy and childhood, in most cases continues the most active through life. This is the chief reason why the great mass of mankind are selfishly engrossed in the pursuit of business, with the intention of hoarding up riches, instead of seeking happiness in the legitimate and proper exercise of all the faculties, which is the only rational mode of attaining this end.

Then again, when children commit a fault, how few parents there are to be found, who think of trying to convince the child's judgment and reason that it has done wrong, but proceed in anger, influenced by the promptings of wild and untamed passion, which they have never learned to control in themselves, to use harsh and improper language, and inflict corporeal punishment. It is a fact which comes within the range of our observation daily, that the faculties of Destructiveness and Combativeness are almost universally strengthened and encouraged in children by severe and coercive measures. Let parents remember that this mode of treating their children is contrary to reason and sound philosophy, and consequently will fail to accomplish the end they desire to attain. Punishment with the rod invariably tends to give a highly stimulated and perverted action to Destructiveness and Combativeness. If a child is angry and irritable (which is frequently the case from indigestion and derangement of the physical

system), to beat it is only adding fuel to the fire already kindled: by repeated whippings an increased quantity of blood is sent to the base of the brain, and it is thereby inflamed and excited, and increased in size and activity. If children are punished in anger, and from a spirit of retaliation, we may reasonably expect to see in them, when full grown and matured, an abnormal exercise of Destructiveness and Combative-ness, instead of these organs performing their proper functions, which is to give energy and efficiency to the higher faculties, and execute and carry into effect that which the intellect originates and dictates.

The space allotted in a small pamphlet will not allow us to go into lengthened detail on the important subject of education. We can not do more than briefly glance at this and kindred topics. But before closing this part of our remarks, I will relate a case which came under the personal observation of the deservedly celebrated and popular phrenologist, Mr. O. S. Fowler, which strikingly illustrates the evil effects of coercive punishment.

Mr. Fowler states that he examined the head of a physician, who when he was twelve years old, was severely flogged by his father. He ran away with the firm resolution never to return till he should be able to flog his father. He left, studied medicine, married, became the father of a child, and returned thirty years after, and flogged his father. Mr. F. states also that this gentleman's Destructiveness, was so very largely developed as to be greatly disproportionate. Comment is unnecessary on this case: it will be perceived at once that cruelty perverted this faculty in childhood. Had this boy received a mild and firm training, or in other words, been

educated under the influence of the law of love (which is the most philosophical and God-like), he never would have been guilty of such an outrage as flogging his aged father.

Another fruitful cause of crime comes through a vitiated or perverted Alimentiveness. Perhaps there is no case of aggravated crime on record, which is not traceable, more or less, to this source. The perversion of this faculty manifests itself in the immoderate use of intoxicating drinks, smoking of tobacco, the use of too highly stimulated food, and gluttony. These are strong incentives to crime; they cause irritation of the stomach; destroy the fine sensibilities of the nerves, and often disease the physical system throughout.

It is a law of the human constitution, that the health, the physiological condition of man, affects the cerebral developments. (This is a fact which even the skeptic in phrenology will not attempt to deny.) There is a corresponding reciprocity between the mental and the physical, between the body and the mind. It must then inevitably follow, that where there is a deranged state of the stomach and secretions, and a diseased nervous system, the brain must participate in the unhealthy action; and the selfish propensities being located in the base of the brain, especially become perverted through the heated and highly excited state of the blood. To prevent crime, we must strike at the root of the evil, by teaching mankind to attend to the health of their bodies, in the use of proper diet, exercise, bathing, &c.

To produce a *moral* reformation, there must first be a physical reformation. Man must be fully acquainted with the laws that govern his physical constitution, *and obey them*, to become

morally and intellectually happy. The tree must be good, in order to produce good fruit. We may as well expect to "Gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles," as to see pure, virtuous, benevolent and peaceable conduct manifested by persons who constantly violate the laws of their physical system, by keeping up continued artificial excitement, caused by excessive eating and drinking.

If, then, what we have stated is admitted to be true, viz: that the causes of crime arise from an improper mode of education, excitement from external causes, such as the use of stimulants, &c., and that certain organs are too largely developed and too active, being inherited from parents, (and the abuse of these faculties almost a certain consequence); and as these hereditary tendencies to commit evil can not be speedily removed, the question arises, what are the best means to remedy the existing evil? How can we most effectually prevent crime under present circumstances? and how shall we punish the offender so as to bring about his reformation, and protect public life and property?

In order to punish crime in the most legitimate and proper manner, the nature and philosophy of man's constitution, together with his relation to external objects, must be fully ascertained. This phrenology teaches. A thorough acquaintance with the philosophy of man's nature, would lead us to adopt a system of moral reform instead of corporeal punishment. Individuals who are by nature and habit so depraved as not to have the power to govern themselves, ought to be placed under the moral government of persons who possess a predominance of the moral and intellectual faculties. Institutions founded on this principle of reformation, would

be much more beneficial to society at large than prisons. Individuals having perverted animal propensities, would be placed out of the reach of temptation to commit crime; would be taught habits of industry, the use of proper diet, intellectual pursuits, and the exercise of the moral faculties. The good which would result from such an institution would surpass any plan which has ever yet been tried for the suppression of vice and crime. Let this system be practically carried into effect, and it will prove to be the most expedient and the best at the present time, and its renovating influence will tell still more powerfully on future generations.

We hope not to be charged with arrogance in presenting these views to the reader. We ask the reader not to pronounce hastily against these suggestions; but to carefully consider a subject which is of such vast importance to community, candidly and without prejudice.

We think also that we have some just grounds for urging a consideration of some new measures for the prevention of crime, as all systems adopted hitherto have failed to accomplish this object. Experience proves that in countries where lenient laws are enacted, the people are as much affected by them as by sanguinary punishments. Severe and cruel retribution for offences, may not be wholly without their beneficial effects, as the infliction of bodily torture is painful to the senses, and through a selfish dread may in some degree tend to restrain crime; but is contrary to the philosophy of man's nature, as it only tends to irritate and excite his propensities, which are already too active. Such treatment may, with some degree of propriety, be applied to the brute creation, but not to man, who is a thinking, rational and intelligent being, endowed with

the innate faculties of judgment, conscientiousness and sense of honor.

Prisoners under the present mode of discipline, who are confined two, five and seven years, do not appear to be much improved when released from imprisonment; but in many cases go out into society doubly infuriated, and with a resolution to commit crimes tenfold worse in character. Why is this? Simply because their faculties have, during their imprisonment, received a wrong training. Instead of being encouraged to strive to do better in the future, and reasoned with on the benevolent and humane principle, they received the epithet of villain, and were driven to their work like brutes rather than men. This treatment so inflames their Combativeness and Destructiveness, and crushes their Self-Esteem, that they seek revenge by plunging themselves still deeper in crime. We occasionally meet with persons who have the charge of criminals, and who have applied the principles of phrenology to the treatment of prisoners. Mr. John McDuffey, one of the keepers of Sing Sing prison, informed me that for two years past he had tried the law of love to some of the most refractory under his charge, and found that by it he could restrain and manage them better than by exercising compulsory measures. There is but little doubt, that if this law was applied universally, it would be much more effective than physical force. Convince a man that you love him, and that you disinterestedly desire his happiness, and you have bound him with cords stronger than chains and shackles made of iron; even the most base and hardened wretch will yield to its influence, if it be fairly and perseveringly tried. We unhesitatingly assert, and thousands both in this country and in

Europe heartily respond to the sentiment, that the law of love is the most potent and powerful law in the universe, and that it will do more to allay and subdue the turbulent passions of mankind than the combined forces of all the armies of earth.

A case occurred a few years since in New South Wales (the British transport colony), where a philanthropist was trying the influence of the law of love on the poor degraded convicts. He states, that in no case did he find an appeal made to the sympathies of those persons, in vain; and he mentions the case of one convict in particular, who was so savage and unmanageable as to resemble a fiend incarnate. He was warned by the overseer of this ferocious convict, and told that it was dangerous to approach him, as he threatened to take the life of all who had any concern with him. The philanthropist, however, regardless of the warning, went and took the criminal by the hand and remonstrated with him in an affectionate manner, respecting his evil conduct. The wretched being soon began to show signs of repentance; he wept like a child, and promised in future to discharge his duty faithfully. We think this case furnishes a strong proof of the efficacy and power of kindness over man, even when in ruins, and sunk to the lowest depths of sin and degradation. However far he may have wandered from the paths of truth and virtue, still he is a man and a brother—an immortal being, having claims on our sympathy, and our best efforts to reform him and make him happy.

“ How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,  
 How complicate, how wonderful, is man!  
 Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!  
 Midway from nothing to the Deity!  
 A beam ethereal, sullied and dishonored, still divine;

What can preserve his life? or what destroy?  
 An angel's arm can't snatch him from the grave;  
 Legions of angels can't confine him there.<sup>35</sup>

An infliction of coercive chastisement is but a remnant of the laws enforced by the cruel despots of the dark and barbarous ages; and as the sun of liberty approaches his meridian height in this glorious republic, we hope to have laws enacted free from the least taint of such as stained and disgraced the statutes of the Roman kings, and the tables of the Decemviri.

We do not require sanguinary punishment in its most merciful form, any more than we require the thumb screw, the stake, the rack and the gibbet. We propose reformation of individuals with perverted faculties, by a system of moral education, founded on the philosophy of man's nature. By this process we will bring the propensities under the control of the higher sentiments, and thus by removing the *cause* the *effects* will cease.

## Confession of Dunbar the Murderer.

Special Dispatch to The Tribune.

ALBANY, Friday Eve. Jan. 24.

The following letter from Rev. Dr. Beecher appears in the *Evening Journal* of this afternoon :

MR. EDITOR—*Dear Sir :* When you asked of me some weeks since, the truth of the rumor then in circulation that Reuben A. Dunbar had made a confession to me, I was not at liberty to state to you all that then had been made known to me. When a person accused of a great crime makes to another a confidential communication in relation to that crime, a prudent man naturally desires time to compare that communication with other facts, of which he may have possessed himself in other ways, and of further proving the fulness of the revelation and of proving the sincerity with which it is made. Influenced solely by a sincere desire to allay all unnecessary excitement in the public mind and at the same time leave the prisoner in the best position for making the preparation so necessary for his future place, I have entirely refrained till now of making any communication to the public. I am now in a position and the near approach of the day of execution would seem to demand it of me to state a few things which the community, and especially those faithful men who were called to act as jurors upon the trial, ought to know before the final execution of the law. On the night of the 20th of December, Reuben A. Dunbar made to myself a full, frank, and unqualified confession of the murder of David L. Lester, and Stephen V. Lester, on Saturday the 28th day of September. This confession, the details of which extends to nearly 20 letter sheet pages was taken down, and after being twice carefully corrected and copied, was finally signed by him on Saturday, December 21st, and at his request, sealed and laid carefully aside, with permission to publish after his death. As by his written request, I have recently given the duplicate of that confession to another person to be given to the public at such time, and under such circumstances as he may deem best. I am relieved from all responsibility, in reference to the copy thus delivered, and absolved from the promise to preserve the secret of its existence. I am informed, however, that it will be given to the public immediately after his execution. His manner of making the confession, his apparently sincere sorrow for his enormous and unnatural crime, and his appearance generally when subjected to the severest tests, which it has been in my power to apply, have left on my mind the impression that the confession is fully and strictly true. The prisoner devotes himself with much apparent earnestness to the work of making a preparation to die,—professes a sincere penitence for his guilt, and his willingness to satisfy the demands of justice by the surrender of his life. That his repentance may prove sincere, and that others may be warned by his example, is the ardent wish and daily prayer of

Yours, very sincerely,  
LUTHER F. BEECHER.