

TEMPERAMENT:

AN ADDRESS.

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“The proper study of mankind is man.” Whether this maxim be true or not as to the race, it is certainly true when applied to our profession. In all ages men have manifested the same unquenchable desire to know themselves. “To see ourselves as others see us” is a rare gift; but it is nevertheless one which we never cease to invoke and always believe to be near. The most popular book is that which treats, not of abstract truth, but of the doings of men. The poem which lives in all hearts for all time is the poem which paints the passions, the sufferings, the joys, the trials, and the achievements of men. Homer and Virgil, who sing of wars and warriors, come home to our bosoms and our sympathies. They are of the earth earthy, like the peoples among whom they mingled. Milton, who discourses of the deeds of devils and archangels, soars into the clear, cold, upper air, which common people seldom reach, and never breathe with comfort.

“I am a man, and think nothing foreign to me which pertains to humanity.” This is the magic key which unlocks all human hearts; whether it be in the

hands of the gentle Goldsmith, breathing in tender strains the sorrows and wrongs of his oppressed villagers, or of Byron, the prince of egoists, baring his lordly bosom to the world and making all women his confidantes, and all men his father-confessors.

The materialist studies man in his corporeal workmanship. He sees him composed of muscles, bones, nerves, glands, brain, blood, and vessels. The psychologist questions man's mental construction—the immaterial part. From the time when Plato reasoned of immortality till to-day, when psychic science gives it almost certain demonstration, philosopher, poet, and divine have never wearied in the search.

The whilom phrenologist took the middle course. He trusted to find truth in that path. He regarded man as a dual being, not wholly a machine, with hinges and pullies, cords and tubes, nor yet made up of mind alone, to which the body is a clog, but as composed of a material body and an immaterial mind linked together and harmoniously acting and reacting upon each other. He believed the brain to be a well-strung instrument, discoursing sweet music at the mind's behest, and held that as was the excellency of the instrument so was the beauty of the melody.

The phrenological doctrine therefore is, that intellect is dependent for manifestation upon the body—

acts through the material organization. In other words, that "the brain is the organ of the mind." This fundamental proposition has, I believe, the assent of mankind. It should follow, then, that as is the size of the brain so is the vigor of the mind. Is this true? Between the size of the brain and the power of the mind there is no uniform exact relation. Certain qualifying circumstances must therefore be taken into account. Hence, enlarged experience and more accurate observation have made it necessary to modify the proposition, and to say that as is the size of the brain, other things being equal, so is the strength of the intellect.

Again, can any true estimate of the quality of the brain be based upon a study of the physiognomy? If this can not be done, the principles of phrenology avail naught in practice, and are therefore worthless. In the futile attempt to make physiognomy the basis of phrenology temperament became involved in the problem. When the phrenologist would judge of the character of a person by his cranial bumps and facial prominences, he found the limitations so many that the attempt was necessarily little more than a study of temperament.

If it be true, as many hold, that temperament affords an indication or test of the tone and intensity of the mind, its study at once becomes invested with scientific interest.

Temperament belongs to classes, as idiosyncrasy belongs to individuals. Temperament is a physiological condition in which the several functions of the system are tempered and displayed in characteristics easily recognized by the eye. Hippocrates classified the temperaments according to a false hypothesis. He divided them into four. This classification, however, was followed by all ancient writers in medicine, and, with some modifications, is still in use. They were denominated after the respective fluids or humors, the superabundance of which in the economy was supposed to produce them. Thus the sanguineous was caused by an excess of the red particles of the blood; the phlegmatic was produced by a superabundance of phlegm, or lymph, or watery particles; the bilious or choleric by a surplus of yellow bile; and the melancholic or atrabiliary had its rise in an excess of black bile. To these Dr. Gregory added the nervous, which was at once adopted. Boerhaave proposed as many as eight temperaments. Broussais, who attempted to reform the science, made as many as nine cardinal divisions. But the five I have named, with endless combinations, are held to include every individual case.

What are the characteristics of body and mind which mark these varieties of temperament? How far they are fanciful or well founded are questions

which I shall not here discuss. Though the classification was unquestionably based upon archaic and false notions of anatomy and physiology, it can not be denied that temperament has a good scientific basis. Let me consider, first, the sanguineous.

In this, the heart and arteries are supposed to possess a predominant energy, and the pulse, consequently, is strong, frequent, and regular; the veins are blue, full, and large; the complexion florid, the countenance animated, the stature erect, the figure agreeable, though strongly marked; the flesh firm, with a proportionate secretion of fat; the hair of a yellow, chestnut, or auburn color. The nervous impressions of individuals of this temperament are acute; the imagination lively and luxuriant; the perception quick; the memory tenacious; the disposition passionate, but easily appeased. They are amorous and fond of good cheer. In love or in war, in action or in council, the sanguineous man is ardent and daring, but inconstant and changeful.

Among the ancients the statues of Antinous and the Apollo Belvedere afford the external marks of this temperament, while the moral side of it is displayed in the lives of Alcibiades and Marc Antony. In modern times we find it in Prince Rupert and Cardinal Richelieu. Amiable, fortunate, and valorous, but light and inconstant to the end of their brill-

iant careers, were these historic possessors of the sanguineous temperament. This temperament predominates in the female sex. Men of this temperament, devoting themselves to labor which demands great muscular exertion, acquire in time the marks of a subdivision of it termed the athletic or muscular. Homer's Ajax and the Farnesian Hercules, John Sullivan and the noted ballet dancers and trapeze performers of our day are of this type. They are dull and unimpressionable. An individual of this temperament is not easily roused, but when aroused he surmounts every obstacle.

The second temperament, or general character noticed by older physiologists is the choleric or bilious. In this the liver, or bile-making organ, is supposed to be overactive, the sanguineous system being at the same time well developed. Here, too, the pulse is strong and hard, but more frequent than in the last. The veins are superficial and projecting. The sensibility is acute and easily excited, with a capacity for dwelling long on a single object. The skin is brownish with a tendency to yellowness, the hair black or dark brown, the body moderately fleshy, the muscles firm and well marked, the figure expressive. In this temperament an active, exuberant bilious is united to an active, exuberant sanguineous system, and every vital organ is therefore abundantly sup-

plied with blood, while its tone is high. The brain acts with energy, and the emotions are as intense as the intellectual faculties are active and vivid. The temper of the mind exhibits impetuosity, abruptness, and violence of passion, hardihood in the conception of a project, steadiness, inflexibility in its pursuit, and indefatigable perseverance in its execution. To this temperament have belonged

“Those grand visitations of the earth,
That on its altered face for ages leave
The traces of their might.”

They have furnished the heroes and martyrs of all ages. Men, audacious, active, fearless, uncompromising, who, impelled by some master passion or high principle, have signalized themselves by great virtues or great crimes, and have been the terror or admiration of the race. Such were Achilles, Alexander, Cæsar, Mohammed, Attila, Luther, Cromwell, Washington, Napoleon, Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Grant.

The third temperament is the melancholic. In this black bile is supposed to prevail, the predominant energy of the sanguineous system being sunk below its level, and derangement of some abdominal organ or nervous center causing the vital functions to be carried on in a weak or irregular manner. Thus it is accounted for. The skin assumes a deeper tinge than in the bilious; the countenance is sallow and

sad; the hair black; the pulse hard and habitually contracted; the imagination is gloomy, and the temper irritable and suspicious. It is a morbid affection rather than a natural and primitive constitution, and is often consequent upon incessant study, long continued sorrow, overtaxing the liver with food and drink, or whatever impairs the tone of the biliary system. Physiologists name as examples of this temperament, Tiberius, Tasso, and Pascal. I might add to these, Cowper, Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Hemans, "L. E. L.," and Shakespeare's greatest conception, Hamlet.

The fourth temperament is the phlegmatic, lymphatic, leuco-phlegmatic. Here the proportion of the fluids is too great for that of the solids, and the character of the solids is defective. Tone is wanting; the flesh is soft; the hair flaxen or fair; the pulse weak and slow; the figure plump, but without expression; the attention wavering, and the memory weak. All the vital actions are more or less languid. The love of indolence is strong, and the aversion to exercise of body or mind insuperable. The opinions or emotions of such rarely change. According to Burton they are "seldomer taken with love-melancholy, but once taken are never freed." The phlegmatic never become illustrious by deeds of their own. It is by accident only that they ever reach distinction or emerge from the good-natured, obscure, plodding

group to which they belong. Theodosius, in earlier times, Henry the Sixth, of England, Louis the Sixteenth, of France, Edward the Confessor, and Jacques, in "As You Like It," are noted names in history and fiction, and your own acquaintance will probably supply you with many more examples of this temperament.

The nervous, which is the fifth and last variety, like the melancholic, is seldom primitive, but is more often developed by artificial causes. Here the nervous system predominates over all. Vivacity of sensation, promptitude, but fickleness of determination, small, soft, and wasted muscles, and generally a slender form characterize this temperament. Created by sedentary, studious, or fashionable life, and the appliances which attend it, it is intensified as the causes continue, and results sometimes in well-marked disease. Among the more illustrious of the examples of this unfortunate temperament may be mentioned Voltaire, Poe, and Shelley; but the experienced physician sees in the hysterical woman its most common typical illustration.

Such is the history of the five varieties of temperament as gleaned from the older medical writers. It must be admitted that the lines are not sharply drawn. The different temperaments are constantly running into one another; they mingle in every variety of shade, and not one of them perhaps is to

be found perfect in any individual. General Grant and Napoleon combined the bilious and phlegmatic. Voltaire was a mixture of the bilious and nervous. Henry Clay, General Lee, and Stonewall Jackson afford examples of the sanguineous and bilious. The nervous and bilious meet in some; in many, the bilious and sanguineous; but in most of all, the sanguineous and phlegmatic. This combination makes the temperament which fits to bear, while it encourages to hope, which qualifies the thousand hands, by which it must be done, for the drudgery of life, for the humbler offices of society.

Before leaving this part of our subject allow me to call your attention to another division or grouping of the constitutional peculiarities of man, which was proposed by one of my early masters, Professor Charles Caldwell. This learned but purely theoretical man deemed his classification of temperament as more philosophical than any which preceded it. He taught that there were seven varieties, founding them on the solids of the body, as Hippocrates had referred them to the fluids. And as, according to Hippocrates, the predominance of certain humors, blood, yellow and black bile, or phlegm, gave to the individual his peculiar constitutional traits, so, according to the teachings of Dr. Caldwell, it is the development of certain ruling organs which makes a

man what he is. I will not waste time with mention of the names, even, entering into the classification on which the old physiologist descanted with his wonted grandiloquence, but shall rather return to this, our original inquiry:

What determines the moral and intellectual character of an individual? Is it the proportion of blood, yellow or black bile, lymph, and nervous fluid, in his system? Or is it the size of his brain, or its configuration, or its organization, or all these combined?

It is the common observation, the common experience of mankind, and no dogma of phrenology, that brain is the material charter, the visible title to the ownership of mind. Exceptions almost innumerable contest the soundness of it, but a conviction of its general truth clings to the mind like the impressions of instinct. And the poets, who find Nature as she is, give to genius the fair, ample front, and make the forehead of the clown villainously low. But it is equally the observation and experience of men that a large head is no sure guarantee of a great mind or of great virtues. It may be large, and the individual may be stupid and vicious, or he may be gifted and base, or he may be amiable and dull. Size alone, then, is not sufficient. But it must be brain in the right place, and brain, too, of the right sort. The elephant has a brain twice as large as that of a man.

Chanticleer and the canary bird have each, relatively, a larger brain in proportion to the size of his body than has man. Mere brain will not do. Nor will even the front of Jove himself always secure mind. There are few collections of casts of heads of the great of the earth which do not contain one whose depressed and narrow front denotes old age and imbecility. And yet it shall be the cast of the head of Lord Chatham, the greatest statesman and orator of his country and his time. The head of one whose talk is solely of bullocks and of bargains often exceeds in mere size that of Daniel Webster, whose grandeur of thought and amplitude of view surpassed that of any other American statesman.

If, then, the possessor of a large head may be dull, and the master of a small one gifted, it follows that we must look deeper for the true solution of character.

Does the predominance of bile, or blood, or water in the system render one ardent, or ambitious, or meek and benevolent, or bold and unprincipled? Take, for example, the bilious temperament—the temperament of genius—and what a motley host do we find marshaled under it! Philosophers, poets, patriots, philanthropists, usurpers, tyrants, regicides, conspirators, the truth-loving and the truth-contemning, the magnanimous, the selfish, the timid, the

courageous, the proud, the humble, the ambitious, the base, apostates and parricides, heroes and martyrs, men who lay down but to dream of evil, and rose up only to commit it, who murdered their subjects before dinner for appetite, and after dinner for digestion. And men, again, who for the diffusion of divine truth have braved the pestilential burnings of every foreign atmosphere, whom no danger could appall nor torture overcome, who endured the fire and faggot, were cast to serpents, and rent by wild beasts, were sawn asunder, but remained to the last unshaken, undismayed. Ignatius Loyola and John Knox were of this class. Could two characters be more unlike than those of John Howard, the philanthropist, and Richard the Third? And yet they belonged equally to the same temperament, and exhibited through life the same invincible firmness of purpose. Look on the portrait of Richard as drawn by his mother :

“Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy ;
Thy school days frightful, desperate, wild and furious,
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous,
Thy age confirmed, proud, subtile, sly and bloody.”

In Howard we have a character which will compare with the noblest that adorn the annals of our race. Yet in decision of character he was equaled, but could not be surpassed, by Nero or Cromwell. Whence then that moral dissimilitude, wide as the

poles? Will temperament account for it? They were alike of the bilious—that under which the bold bad men, as well as the good great men have ranged. Will education explain it? Education doubtless had much to do in directing and confirming the inborn primitive tendency, but the question still recurs: Whence that innate propensity, so intense in one to acts of goodness, in the others so resistless to violence, contest, bloodshed, and crime? The difference may be sought for in the development and organization of the brain, not in the mere amount, but in its quality; and not only in its absolute quality and tone, but in the size of particular compartments of it. What the peculiar condition is on which its perfection depends, science has not yet revealed to chemist or anatomist. We are still in the dark concerning it.

On analysis, the brain of a man is found to consist of 80 per cent of water, 4 of white fat, 7 of albumen 4 of sulphur, $1\frac{1}{2}$ of phosphorus, and a small portion of a number of salts. The ratio of water in the brain of a calf is also just 80 per cent. I will not stop here to inquire, what it would puzzle the most acute phrenologist or metaphysician to determine, how far the presence of this brilliant inflammable principle—phosphorus—may be concerned in evolving the hot, hasty temper of the soldier, and the proverbial irritability of the poet, the flashings of wit and the corruscations of genius.

A mystery hangs over the vital functions.

In the stomach is a fluid which dissolves not only soft and vegetable substances, but cartilage and bone, and of this powerful solvent the chemist finds ninety parts to be water. A difference of quality is far from implying, of necessity, a difference in composition. Chemically there is no difference between the diamond and charcoal; little between soft iron, which yields easily to the chisel, and cast steel, which cuts all but silex and the diamond. Diamond is to be regarded as the type of Cæsar's brain, charcoal of the butcher's. Chatham's small brain was as steel, and thus his full-orbed intellect "shone like the sun," bright, piercing, resistless. George the Third lost America because his brain was, as soft iron, ductile, flexible or malleable, as this or that political manipulator pulled or twisted or hammered it.

Temperament is the thermometer by which the tone of the brain is to be ascertained. By the eye, the curling locks, the complexion, the pulse, all the movements of the individual, we are to determine whether the brain is like soft metal or the Damascus blade, the dull, spongy charcoal or the glittering gem. Developed in one region, and having the true temper, and moral influences favoring, a Howard is formed to make "the circumnavigation of charity." Developed in another region, and allowing a bad edu-

cation or the spirit of a barbarous age to confirm and strengthen the bad tendency, an Attila comes forth to desolate and to curse. The twig is bent by nature, certain tendencies are innate; education, in its broad sense, may control, improve, subdue, almost eradicate. The predisposition is given, is sometimes inherited, sometimes comes as the wind blows, we see not whence. It was before the propitious gale of benevolence that Howard pursued the voyage of his illustrious life. Ambition is the headlong current by which warriors and statesmen, the mighty men of the earth, have been swept along the tumultuous sea of human affairs.

This principle finds further and stronger illustration in the lives and characters of Julius Cæsar and Marc Antony. One can not be said to have been worse or better than the other. Both were highly though not equally gifted, but they differed widely in their passions, powerful in both, though not the same in both. Cæsar, like Antony, was touched by the charms of Egypt's dazzling Queen, and bowed for a moment to their supremacy—but it was only for a moment. It was but an episode in his eventful life, from which he quickly returned to its grand story. The heady current adown which he sailed was not to be stayed or turned aside from its course. The spur by which his daring spirit was goaded almost to mad-

ness Marc Antony's peaceful bosom scarcely knew. With Cæsar ambition was a whirlwind drawing all other passions into its desolating path. With Marc Antony it was a fitful breeze, now gusty and loud, now softer than the whisper of love. The orator who had inflamed the Roman people by his eloquence yielded himself an easy captive to a more bewitching eloquence, and for another Helen bade "Rome her Tiber melt, and the wide arch of the ranged empire fall!"

So much for the scientific aspect of the question.

But, gentlemen of the graduating class, I should fall short of my duty to you if I should stop here. The theme is indeed scientific, but it has a spiritual bearing as well, which is of greater interest and deeper moment. While I have made use of the spiritists' term, and called the brain "the organ of the mind," I have perhaps at the same time incurred the imputation of materialism, in that my comparisons and metaphors have attached too much importance to the physical quality and conformation of brain in accounting for differences in the minds of men. It can not be denied that mental phenomena are intense or dull, broad or narrow, as the various organs of the brain are well or ill developed. But it would be fatal to thence conclude that brain is in any sense mind. Though placed for a time in a tenement of flesh,

“the mind is its own place.” Brain is no more mind than harp is music. The harp makes music only under the hand of the player, and he, though a master, would bring forth but discord and confusion if his instrument were out of tune or temper.

I said that psychic science had all but demonstrated the immortality of the soul. Whatever may be the outcome of present researches into the unknown, it is certain that the instinct of man with the trend of science is and has ever been in accord with the reasoning of Plato and the teachings of Paul concerning this question of questions.

If the Ego, the I, is, it must always have been; and if it is, and always has been, it must always be. “Nought from nothing comes” is a maxim which will stand while logic lasts and worlds circle their orbits. And to say that the soul of man, be his body evolved as it may from the distant protozoön or protophyte which was the beginning of life on this globe, to say that the sublime phenomena of this soul are but a series of vibrations in the specialized and highly differentiated protoplasm of the cells of the brain, is as monstrous as it would be to say that the suns and the planets dropped full-orbed out of the inane. No, gentlemen, we are, we have been, and we shall be.

“Our birth is but a sleep, and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home.”

We are here without our will, but not without responsibility. Life, with certainty of trial and trouble, but with possibility of success and happiness, is before you. Quit you like men! Be strong! Give careful heed to the ineffable teachings and example of the Great Physician, and so live and practice and ornament the high office which is your calling, that, as your souls expand by study, thought and experience, they may come to be the better fitted for endless unfolding in the infinite beyond. There, through the eons of eternity, with fit environment, the deathless spirit of man shall approximate more and more to that perfection which is God: “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”