

**COMPARATIVE
PHYSIOGNOMY; OR,
RESEMBLANCES BETWEEN
MEN AND ANIMALS**

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Comparative Physiognomy; Or, Resemblances Between Men and Animals by James W. Redfield

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JAMES W. REDFIELD

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1878

COMPARATIVE PHYSIOGNOMY

OR

RESEMBLANCES

BETWEEN MEN AND ANIMALS.

BY

JAMES W. REDFIELD, M.D.

With his hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. SHAKESPEARE.

ILLUSTRATED BY 330 ENGRAVINGS.



REDFIELD,
CLINTON HALL, NEW YORK.

1852.

P R E F A C E .

THE word *preface* is an indication that a book, like its author, must have a *face*; and unless it be a misnomer, there is no reason why it should not be illustrated with faces. That it comes first and foremost it would be useless to observe, had not certain persons been inclined to put it in the background. We will state frankly, at the outset, that this particular preface is intended to "face down"—not by "barefaced assertions," but by a presentation of faces and arguments—the unjust treatment to which the face has been subjected.

Why should a periodical, that professes to be a "Journal" of Phrenology and of kindred sciences, look out at the back of its head whenever it takes a peep at Physiognomy? We know not, but humanity claims that the eyes in such a case should be set right. We address ourselves, therefore, to answering the objections contained in two articles on this subject in the "Phrenological Journal," both of them new-year's presents, for which we have reason to be thankful.

The first formidable obstacle we meet with is this: "The naked skull of poor Yorick, notwithstanding its yawning eye-sockets and ghastly grin, presents the evidences of his former warmth of affection and his racy wit, although the signs of these emotions in the face are obliterated for ever." Is there, then, nothing left of the skull but the cranial portion? and does not Physiognomy claim that the character is indicated in the *features* of the face, as well as in the expressions?

The idea conveyed by the objection is, that the "naked skull" is the all of Phrenology, and only a part of Physiognomy. The naked skull, says the writer, "is the only organic memento of the character of the dead;" but Physiognomy claims the advantage of the *naked face, while living*, and of being able to say, "Blessed be the art that can immortalize!" In portraits, the skull remains in the background, where nature placed it; and the power of art is expended upon the face, in making it live, and breathe, and grow warm with life, and almost speak. Would the "naked skull of poor Yorick" have been treated contemptuously in the third person, or gibingly in the second, if it had been as good an index of character as the face? "How abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to keep the table on a roar?" Contrast this with Cowper's address to his mother's picture:—

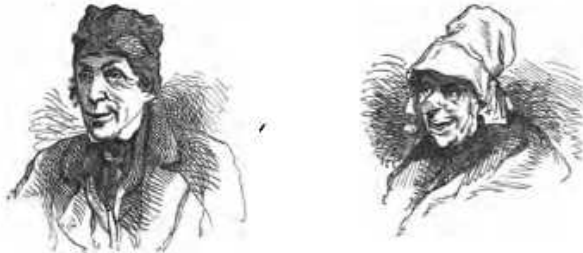
"That face is thine, thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me!"

What if somebody should become so phrenology-mad as to hang up "the only organic memento of the character of the dead" on the parlor-wall! Pity it is that Nature should have made "the only reliable index of character" so inaccessible; and that Art, when Nature fails in her attempt, should substitute a wig, and add such a fashion of head-dress as to be a burlesque upon the reliability, pretensions, and significance, of the cranium!

The second formidable objection is this: "The temporary effects of an emotion may be set forth in the face, obscuring for the time being the natural traits of character, while the form of the head remains the same, offering to the phrenolo-

gist equal facility to read the *real elements* of the mind, whether it be lashed into fury, and the face distorted with rage, or lulled to a calmness of spirit and placidity of countenance by all the soothing appliances of peace and love." We would like particularly to see the author of this thrilling passage examining a head when the mind was "lashed into fury, and the face distorted with rage;" and we would inquire if, under the "soothing appliances" of his fingers, the bones of the cranium ever discovered themselves to be more osseous than those of the face?

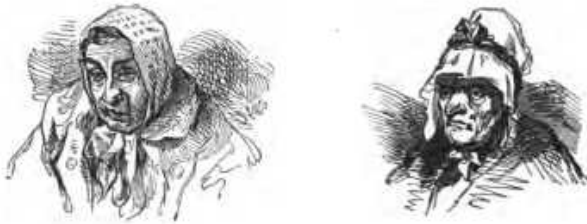
Not far from this stage of the criticism several faces are introduced from the "favorite delineator of eccentric character," Dr. Valentine, showing how a man may "frame his face to all occasions." Let us compare "Monsieur Grenoble," or the representation of "a sympathetic, good-natured, confiding, simple-hearted Frenchman," with a genuine exhibition of the same traits, and see if there is not a difference. Here is a



Frenchwoman whose habitual character is that described above, and where is the hesitation in deciding which is the genuine and which is the false? In the first, the feeling which appears upon the face is superficial; but in the other the feeling is the character itself, and the expression is not put on, but is the very face.

By the side of a countenance that is said to exhibit "every

line, angle, and expression, of moping melancholy," and is called "the embodiment of sadness—a visage fit to freeze the soul"—let us place the expression of sullen gloominess and frigidity in a woman who resembles but is seen to be in a very different mood of mind from the other. In this com-



parison, the pretended "hypochondriac" is easily distinguished from the portrait, which has the expression of genuine sentiment and stern reality.

The second criticism is now in turn. First, it says of the brain, that "it is the trunk of the mental tree, and that all outward signs of character and emotion spring from and depend upon it, as do the branches and leaves of the natural tree upon its trunk." According to this, "all the outward signs of character and emotion" are in the arms and hands, and the features and expressions of the countenance, which are compared to branches and leaves. This is more than we are willing to accept, for we acknowledge that there are *some* outward signs of character in the skull.

The next objection is the more formidable on account of being an assertion, which is this: "We often find a person, whose father and mother are very unlike in character, who resembles in head one parent and in face the other. Such a person's character is always found to follow the phrenological development. . . . The face will everywhere be recognised as being very much like that of the father, for example, while

the character is precisely that of the mother . . . and as unlike that of the father . . . as can well be imagined." The premises in this case will not sustain the conclusions. That from a father and a mother, whose opposite characters are indicated by opposite faces, can be produced an offspring whose face and character are opposite to each other, is a contradiction in terms. If the face and the character "belie" each other, the one may as well be convicted of falsehood as the other: but the truth is, whatever belies one belies them both; and the assertion, that one is true and not the other, belies itself.

The next assertion which strikes us as being very singular is this: A person "looks at the face, but the scenery above it gives him, after all, his idea of the man. We say an eye is beautiful, but it is as much the scenery around the eye that gives it beauty and expression as the eye itself, and even more." The first sentence teaches us that we can have no idea of a man till he doffs his hat; but the second descends from that high empyrean, and acknowledges that there is scenery *around* the eye, which, as the eye is very expressive, must be an important index of character. But the most ridiculous thing is, that a "a glass eye keeps pace exactly with the natural one, in all apparent changes of that speaking organ." Of course, then, when a high-spirited horse "darts the fire of passion" from his eyeballs, it is "the change of scenery around the eye, and not the eye itself;" and, of course, Art may do as well as Nature in manufacturing eyes! Accordingly, our critic has caused a pair of eyes to be executed for the picture of the bust of Vitellius—with what intention we shall presently see. It is quite probable, too, that Art can manufacture a face out of the odds and ends of different characters that shall be quite equal to one of Nature's own productions. On this principle, faces are manufactured that are intended to be, and that are, perfect contradictions to Physiognomy.

"To illustrate how the appearance of the head changes the expression of the face," the inventor introduces "four engravings."—"These," says he, "are *made up* from two portraits, each of which is engraved on two pieces of wood, divided just above the eyes, so that the head of each may be united to the other. These parts are *mismatched*. Two of the four are *as Nature made them*; the other two are composed of the head of each on the face of the other." In this quotation the man-



ufacturing process is well described. It would seem as if the writer intended that his own two charming productions should be taken as illustrations of the principle that the head may be derived from one parent and the face from the other. As "the character is always found to follow the phrenological development," Vitellius and Wilson, having changed heads, must be described thus. First, Vitellius: "A man remarkable for talent, purity, and elevation of character; a pattern of benevolence, of enlarged and liberal views, a zealous friend of the poor; who lived, like Oberlin, for the human race." In his physiognomical judgment of Vitellius, the writer exclaims: "What a beastly face! how sensual and gluttonous! what tyranny and severity! How much of the base robber and murderer are seen in that countenance! how savage and how repulsive!" But, as the head of this beastly Roman emperor