

Literature, &c.

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TRIBULATION TREPID.
A MAN WITHOUT A HOPE.

A PHRENOLOGICAL ILLUSTRATION.

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It is inconvenient to have to bear with personal deficiencies—troublesome and disheartening not to possess all the senses and the faculties which are demanded to enable man to compete with his fellows upon equal terms; and it requires philosophy that we do not repine when we find ourselves in any respect, either physical or mental, compelled to stand aside in the unpleasant attitude of being an exception to the general rule. It is true that the march of science is able, to a considerable extent, to obviate corporeal default. Eyes are constructed so well as to deceive the eye, although the constructed eye is not yet so perfect that we shall hope to see with it far into the opacity of mill-stones. Legs are manufactured more symmetrically beautiful than the majority of real legs; and the skilful artist will if you are only tall enough, modulate you into a figure which might put an Apollo to the blush. But the steam leg, in its swiftness of locomotion, is as yet no more than a dream of the visionary; and we may pad ourselves into muscularity as much as we please, without gaining a particle of power.

We are aware that by the aid of spectacles he who would otherwise be always stumbling over the dog, and tripping in contact with other people's feet, periling his precious countenance by rude collisions with every species of obstacle, may contrive to see his way through the world in comparative clearness. But science has not perhaps succeeded to the same extent in the world of metaphysical regeneration; nor do we know that any man's genes have as yet been fully converted into swans, though he may think them progressive creatures in the scale of ornithology, and likely to reach a higher position than has been attained by former members of the race. It is theoretical, we learn, with the phrenologists, and probably practical also, to a greater extent than the world is willing to admit, that there are processes whereby the neglects of dame nature may at least be partially counteracted and repaired, so that 'bumps' shall be raised, where depressions exist, and some degree of potency be secured in those 'organs' which were originally faint and feeble, just as the muscular fibre is strengthened by exercise, and as our agile capabilities are increased by a judicious practice of the thews and sinews on which activity depends.

Now, while we hope for the sake of humanity in general, that these assumptions will fully bear the test of experiment, it must yet be conceded that education fails somewhat in this regard; and that in thinking, as in dancing, much depends upon the configuration of mind and of body with which we were endowed from the outset. The phrenologists are right in the belief that training has its advantages; but there must be a basis on which that training is to proceed, or the result will be such as cannot fail to lead to serious disappointment.

For example, and in the way of parenthesis it would be a parlous difficulty to teach the innate craven to plunge valiantly onward at the desperate head of a forlorn hope, or to hurl himself recklessly upon the sharp and bristling array of a forest of hostile bayonets. You may debate the question if you are so inclined, insisting on it vehemently that, in honor's view; there is no essential difference in a case like this, between a glorious death and the triumph of victory, and that the disastrous of the two is infinitely preferable to an age without a name, yet, our life on it, it will prove that your friend of the weak nerve, and of the non-chivalrous temperament, is not to be talked, by the most persuasive, into any relish for cold steel, or into any decided fancy for the reception into himself of certain intrusive pellets of hot lead. Nay, Cicero's eloquence would be wasted in the endeavour to induce him to come to the conclusion that it is much better for him to be extended face upward on the ensanguined plain, after the fashion of the 'grinning honor' of Sir Walter Blount, than to find himself sound in body, but without a single sprig of laurel to his name, snugly enfolded in the blankets awaiting a call to breakfast. Nature, you will observe, has denied to him the perception of the romantic and the poetical. He has no desire to be posthumous to his own reputation. To such a one, the hard knock is simply a hard knock, unmitigated by transcendental embellishment; and renown has no part in the plain arithmetic of his calculation. He values life by its admeasurement—according to the number and length of its days. So give it up at once—there is no sun—of Australix or of any other place—that can ripen this man into a warrior, or tempt him to enter into a fierce competition for the wealth of glory.

And thus—musically—we find that people without an ear, do not often take the lead in operatic performances; or, if they participate that the operatic performances are not particularly benefited by their interference. The querulous and fretful—do they acquire the resources of patient fortitude? No often, so far as our experience extends; and we do not know that the simpleton, school him ever so much, is likely to obtain distinction for himself as a philosopher—nay, he is often furthest from it

at the very moment when he imagines himself a great deal wiser than his neighbours.

Such as these, as well as others who might be mentioned, have no foundation on which the deficient 'bump' is to be elevated; and, as a general rule, it is just as well to abandon as a 'bad job' all effort to render them distinguished in the display of those faculties which form no part of their primary constitution. The superstructure that may be raised on an insecure soil, must of necessity be weak and 'shackling,' and all the military education that can be bestowed on the poltroon, will not prevail to prevent an ill-timed manifestation of that species of plume which obtains ignoble renown under the epithet of the 'white feather.' It has been in him probably from his birth, that he must locomote in a direction contrary to that in which 'the nettle danger' uprears its ugly front; and, under these circumstances, the impulse to retrograde travel will burst all the artificial and conventional bonds which have been devised to drive it into the teeth of the battery. It was the design of nature that our friend should run; and will venture to stand antagonistical to nature.

It is a mere flight of fancy, no doubt, into the illimitable regions of hypothesis, but we should very much like to see the day when a Bumpological art shall be matured, and practical science of Organology be brought into operation. Then there will be some use in the knocks about the scone, which are now so woefully wasted; and when we shall be driven into frenzies, the manifestations of our wrath will become really beneficial to those on whom they may chance to be bestowed. Then we should find a rationale of corporal punishment—a thing not to be whirled about in random kicks and cuffs, but to be so applied as to develop that very bump, a deficiency of which, in the offending party, has so raised our vengeful ire. Such, perchance, is the latent reason why we are so anxious to maltreat those who are not disposed to obey our behests, as well as the true motive why it is an impulse of our nature to chastise the enemy. Education would thus be revolutionized, and the Art of War would be brought within the range of the directly useful sciences.

But to descend at once to the facts that are before us, it is a blessed thought to believe that by a wise system of tuition, the small uncertain spark of a virtue may be breathed into a steady flame, and if, infirm of purpose as so many are, they could be strengthened into a surer aim by due attention to the feebler parts of character, none, we are sure could be found to regret it, and so we are and we intend to be full of respect to this phrenological idea, which might, we think, be somewhat more carefully engrafted upon systems of educational improvement; so that the mere appeal to the memory might leave room for the analysis and development of the moral being.

We should go to school upon a different principle then; and probably it may not be a useless waste of imagination to reflect a little upon the novel scenes that would then be presented in the halls of the academy.

'My son Bob, Mr Professor—this is Bob sir, trying to hide himself behind the door—stand up Bob; and behave like a man—Bob, Mr Professor, hasn't got any pride, and has the smallest quantity of dignity. He's always letting himself down, and never tries to hys himself up—likes the raggedest boys the best, Mr Professor, and prefers the company of the sweepst to going to the nicest of tea-parties. Bob always feels flat in genteel society, does Bob.'

'Ah—I comprehend—a very common case, indeed; but curable—take Bob, Mr Simpkins and touch him up in the region of self-esteem. Don't be afraid—we'll make Bob—you'll have to call him Master Robert then—as proud as Lucifer, in a week or two. When we send him home he will hardly speak to his own father, and he won't own any of his relations.'

'And here is Peter, sir, and Sam—nice boys as ever was, only they don't care nothing for nobody and will have it all their own way, which is apt to be the wrong way, if not a bad way.'

'Ho! ho! knock up a bump in the region of approbateness, so that they may quit thinking for themselves, and always want somebody to think for them.'

'Please, Mr Professor, our Tom appropriates and conveys—sugar, sir, or pennies convertible to sugar—he bones, sir, whatever he can lay his blessed little hands upon, the darling; every thing is fish that comes to Tom's net.'

'Just so—Tom has not yet got beyond the first principle of human nature, which impels us to help ourselves to whatever we want—the application must be made to Tom, sharply, just where his conscience ought to be. Bump up a conscience for Tommy.'

The disrespectful, who, in some way or other, are disposed to make faces at their superiors, would require to be rapped rather soundly in and about 'veneration,' and we are now to be told that a smart blow on the eye is sure to awaken vociferous displays of the faculty of 'language.' For him who comes too late, which is bad—or stays too late, which is worse—what could be better than a forcible appeal to 'time?' And if a boy—your boy, or any other body's boy—cannot be easily made to see the essential difference between his own selfish will and your authoritative behest, you have only to perform for him a tune upon his slumbering organ of 'comparison,' and you shall have music, you may depend upon it. If the same rebellious individual is slow to discern why he should obey, lend him a smart filip upon his 'casualty,' eductive of the why, and provocative of the

wherefore, and if you yourself cannot discover the point of a joke, taking the fact for granted that it is a joke which comes to a point—some jokes, like some people, come to nothing—depend upon it that your 'wit' is beginning to loose its edge, and is getting to be somewhat rusty in the method of its operation.

No one, we presume will venture to deny that 'cautionsness,' well rubbed and roused, has a tendency to keep our fingers out of the fire; or that an inflammation of our 'combative-ness' will give us joy in the facing of our foe. But what, let us ask, what is to be done, if, like the peculiar one who now comes under our special notice—what is to be done, if in all the qualities which go to make up our mentality, we have not one scintilla of self reliance and expectation, and are alike.

TRIBULATION TREPID.

A MAN WITHOUT A HOPE!

You see, the case is in every way a hopeless one—for Tribulation Trepid never had a hope. He has no more idea of what you mean by a hope than a blind man can understand what you are talking about when you speak of colors. Hope!—how do you go about it—how do you begin when you want to hope? The first principle of hopefulness is not resident within the confines of the craniology of Tribulation Trepid; and, therefore from the very moment of his birth, up and down—but more down than up—poor Tribulation Trepid has been lost in despond and in despair. Who ever called him 'Young Hopeful?' It would have been the very heartlessness of cold derision.

If in the adventurousness of youth—for the earlier stages of existence form a perpetual exploring expedition, and an unceasing voyage of discovery into all sorts of holes and corners, to the constant annoyance of those who do not appreciate the march of mind in its primary manifestation—if then, at this interesting period, Tribulation Trepid undertook to exercise his limbs, and to gratify curiosity by climbing up the chair, or ascending the table, that in this way his knowledge of the laws of gravitation might be increased, and his power of self-reliance extended, and if, thwartingly, at such perilous moment, as too often happens to be the case, the usual maternal caution fell upon his ear.

'Tribby, Tribby, what are you at? That child will fall and break its good-for-nothing neck!'

Tribby, of course, did fall—he was sure to do it—only suggest the worst of the alternatives to his mind, and, lacking hope to sustain his trembling limbs, he dropped at once into the fell catastrophe. He took it for granted that it must be so; and so it was. The great secret of successful adventure is confidence—a fixed faith in the potency of your star; and he who is deficient in this belief, will find it much better to remain at home, or to 'go ashore,' than to tempt the chances of the storm. He, in truth, seeketh a shipwreck, who is not assured of his own buoyancy, and that man marches to an overthrow, whose mind is always dwelling on the probabilities of being beatea. He alone triumphs, who disdains to entertain a doubt of his own invincibility, and thus compels fortune to perch, whether she will or no, upon his daring banner. But such was not our Tribulation.

'Here, Tribby, take this pitcher down to Susan, and be sure you do n't fall, or I'll box your ears you Tribby.'

Under the doctrine of pains and 'penalties,' which until lately formed the basis of all education—sound whipping and sound teaching have heretofore been identical—one would have thought that, with such a threatening over his head, Tribulation Trepid would not have dared to treat himself to a luxury so expensive as the species now referred to. To slip down stairs by himself is wicked enough in any child, when we reflect upon the uproar which every child is apt to create under these circumstances. But down stairs, including a best pitcher in the gymnastic operation, to the exceeding detriment of the creakery, is an offence not to be excused at the judgment-seat of the good housekeeper. It is a sin which cannot be pardoned or overlooked.

'Now mind—don't you fall and break that pitcher, Tribby, as you always do,' was the pursuing admonition to our child of we, as he entered upon the labyrinthine convolutions of the dark stairway—but just then—did you expect it?—era-a-sh!—bimble—bamble—rub-dab!—Tribby has achieved his descent by a short hand process, and lies vociferously prone upon his back at the landing-place, environed by the fragments of the ware. We are not satisfied that it mended the matter at all and we are quite sure it did not mend the pitcher, but we presume it was a satisfaction, if not to both, at least to one of the parties involved; and a satisfaction is something in this unsatisfactory state of existence; and so Tribulation Trepid received his promised reward—'I'll teach you,' and so forth—causing his auricular appendages to reverberate for an hour or two, and likewise to be comfortably warm for at least the same space of time, affording him both his music and his caloric at the lowest possible rate; though it can scarcely be said that his hope underwent any considerable degree of augmentation by the process.

'Tribby Trepid does n't know his lesson, I am tolerably well assured of that,' said the teacher, glancing significantly at his rattle—for Tribulation Trepid underwent his share of schooling when rattle was lord paramount in the academic groves, and served, as it made the schoolboy 'smart' in more senses than one, to counteract, on the part of perceptrors, the

baneful influences of sedentary life by affording wholesome exercise in the 'dusting of jackets.'

Now Tribby's hope not being strong in the faith that he would prove thoroughly conversant with his lesson, when brought up to the test of actual experiment, though he was acquainted with it passing well when he left home, the announcement of this foregoing conclusion in his teachers mind, coupled with certain tingling remembrances connected with rattle, drove all other lessons from his depending brain; and he was executed accordingly to the infinite relief of Mr Switchem's dyspeptic symptoms, and to the marvelous increase of the aforesaid Switchem's appetite for dinner. And so, reproof, condemnation and rattle being inevitable, why should Tribulation Trepid annoy himself by the previous pain of toilsome study? He did so no more.

'I shan't know 'em if I do; and I shall be whipped whether I do or not,' said Trippy, and he forthwith bowed himself down to that which appeared to be the inevitable, allowing hope to be crushed beneath the lumbering wheels of a Juggernaut of fear.

Hope on—hope ever. There is nothing in this world so valuable as hope. The thing hoped for, precious though it be, is perhaps less of a blessing in itself than the state of mind which convinces us that by the proper effort we are able to obtain it. Better is it to be full of hope than to have triumphed in the pursuit of all that man regards as most desirable. Hope is richer than a diadem. Hopefulness is a perpetual banquet—a feast that never cloy; and he who has around him the glowing atmosphere which hope alone can bring, has no need to envy the successes that others have achieved. His dreams surpass reality.

But Tribulation Trepid has no hope. If there were a germ of it at the outset of his career, it was, as it were, trampled down and buried by a conviction steadfastly impressed, that, if others could succeed he was sure to fail; and therefore, he did fail.

Did he mount a horse—oh! Tribulation Trepid will be thrown from the saddle, as a matter of course—and he was thrown. Did he undertake to leap the break—the discouraging idea seemed to arrest him midway that he could not do it; and Trepid emerged dripping from the wave. And so it was, and so it has been, throughout the life of Tribulation—such it may be, is a secret why the lives of so many of our kind present an unbroken series of disastrous failure. They lack the inspiring voice of hope. They knew it would be so; and so it is.

It is a melancholy thing, moreover, to have to do with the family of the Trepids. In the endeavour to encourage them, your own hopefulness seems to fade away; and the mere you labor to elevate them and to push them forward, the more heavily, and inertly, and listlessly do they fall back upon your hands. They are convinced that it is of 'no use doing nothing,' and they tamely suffer every competitor to pass them in the race.

Just so it is with the lugubrious individual now before us, who invariably puts the worst possible face upon every matter, for the simple reason that, as in the reflection of a mirror, every matter wears the worst possible face to him, and as he looks at matters sadly, despondingly, just so do matters return the glance. He sighs over matters, and groans over matters. He walks through the streets with a longitude of visage and a mournful down-drawing of the corners of the mouth that would be most appropriate at the funeral of his best friend, but which are sadly out of time and place at every other moment; and he feels assured always that it is going to rain—if [not to-day, certainly to-morrow—that is, in case a shower is not wanted. Otherwise it will never rain again—it has forgotten how.

Beware, then, how your sympathizing nature induces you to accost Tribulation Trepid in the highway, unless you are proof against the contagious influences of sorrow, and are firmly fixed in the confidence of your own hope, for it seems to afford a mournful satisfaction to all the Trepids to bring others down to their own melancholy level.

'You may try,' say they—'no objection to any body's trying—but it's not often that trying comes to anything. Whatever it may be, it will never answer—we never knew things to answer nowadays,' with various other assurances of a like enlivening nature. Beware, then, of the effect of contact with the Trepids, unless your nature is of that sanguine sort, which bids defiance to the chill, and has hardihood to sport itself safely in December's snow.

How are you Trepid? How do you feel to day, Mr. Trepid?

'A great deal worse than I was, thank 'ee—most dead, I am obliged to you—I am always worse than I was, and I don't think I was ever and better. I am very sure, any how, that I am not going to be any better; and, for the future, you may always know I am worse than asking any questions; for the questions make me worse if nothing else does.'

Why, Trepid, what is the matter with you?

'Nothing, I tell you, in particular; but a great deal is the matter with me in general; and that's the danger, because we don't know what it is. That's what kills people—when they don't tell what it is—that's what's killing me. My great grandfather died of it, he did, and so will I. The doctors don't know—they can't tell—they say I am well enough, when